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CHIEF EDITOR:
JIAN RONG
NEWS EDITOR:
YU SHANSHAN
DESIGNER:
DENG NING

One-of-a-kind design

Page 16



北京青年报
BEIJING YOUTH DAILY



Page 20-21 Cool off in the mountains

Looking to escape the heat? Consider Baihua Mountain, where nightly temperatures dip to 10 C.



Page 17 The best simple foods

Luxury can come in a fine cup of coffee or a simple *shaobing*.

Tent-Theater Beijing



For 37 years, tent theater master Sakurai Daizo has used his tent to criticize and comment.

Now Beijing has its own tent. Having staked out a site in suburban Picun, an area where migrant workers outnumber local residents five to one, Tent-Beijing is ready to present its first drama: the real life of urban construction workers.

In true tent fashion, the production - funded with a shoe-string budget pooled by its cast - speaks about society without the corporate and governmental restraints that bind normal productions.

**Read more on
Pages 12-13**

Community care first in health plan

Page 2

Rural hukou better, say students

Page 3

Apple Apps give hope to startups

Page 4

Int'l treats in the Ritan Area

Pages 23-24



Health reforms bring primary care to communities



British-Chinese family doctor Xie Jibo examines a resident at Haiyuncang Community Health Center.

Photo by Rao Qiangqiang

By Chu Meng

Xie Jibo, 52, a British-Chinese born in Hong Kong, worked as a family doctor for 15 years in Oxford after getting his master's degree as a general practitioner.

Today he is a family doctor at Beijing Haiyuncang Community Health Center.

When Xie came to Beijing four years ago he worked in a foreign-invested clinic like many of his colleagues. That job paid nearly 100 times what he earns today.

But Xie didn't change jobs for the money, he changed for the challenge. Community health centers, the capital's most fundamental medical bodies, are in the middle of a tremendous transformation.

Family physicians

Xie asked several friends to help him get a job at Haiyuncang Community Health Center six months ago.

The job was one created this year by a pilot project funded by the Ministry of Health: that of the family physician.

Like most people, residents in Haiyuncang neighborhood who needed medical treatment used to have to go to a state-owned A-level hospital and wait several hours to see a specialist.

The new pilot aims to minimize the need for these long trips and long waits by allowing neighborhood residents to phone their local health centers to schedule appointments with family doctors like Xie.

The experiment, now in its sixth month, is a trial of what may become a new model of primary health care in China. Changes are intended to improve quality and access to health care and to reign in rapidly rising costs.

"Family doctors have it rough," Xie said. Their income is low and they have limited social recognition. At the local clinic I saw many excellent general practitioners doing basic work because the patients didn't trust them. They only trust the best specialists at the biggest hospitals who prescribe the most expensive medicine."

Xie said it is the opposite in Britain.

"In Beijing, 80 percent of the urban residents go to large, modern hospitals even for minor illnesses. Facilities at the grass-

roots level are horribly underused. But in Oxford, 100 percent of the residents receive primary treatment at a clinic."

Chronic disease

This is changing in Haiyuncang. After some initial reluctance, many people have come to prefer their local clinic.

"It was difficult at first," said Ma Bowen, the doctor leading the project. "Residents did not trust the doctors. They did not like the small hospitals."

Now, each doctor at the Haiyuncang clinic has 500 residents under his or her care, and the number of patients they see is rising.

Each doctor is given a computer connected to an internet with software for compiling and analyzing case data. By computerizing patient records and prescriptions, the project team "has generated very detailed 'prescription profiles' by doctor and by disease, which are beginning to be analyzed," Ma said.

This data will help researchers monitor prescription patterns to avoid over-prescription, one of the main factors driving up health care costs in the capital.

Ma hit on his current idea in 1995 while attending McGill University in Montreal. "In Canada, I learned a lot about the Canadian [health care] system," he said. "I think everyone should have their own family doctor."

The model Ma proposed to the International Development and Research Center is loosely based

on the community health centers he saw while living in Quebec.

Community doctors are former specialists who have undergone three months of training as family physicians. The idea is to provide comprehensive care and raise the health awareness of the local population.

Each month, the health center sends out a newsletter to its patients with health tips and free lectures on health care. Family members are also taught how to care for sick relatives.

Convenient care

Many patients appreciate having an ongoing relationship with their doctor.

Area resident Liu Guangdou, one of Xie's patients, said he sees the community health center as a big family.

"My wife has cancer. On her bad days, the doctor can come to pay us a visit. Before we would have to wait at a hospital for two hours and might even end up with a bad doctor who would just write us a prescription and send us home," he said.

He said their doctor always calls to follow up a few days after each appointment.

Most consultations last 10 minutes. "In Britain, family doctors usually see 20 to 50 patients every morning. Every patient goes to a family doctor for an initial diagnosis and is referred to a bigger hospital only when necessary. In the afternoon, we usually do house calls. It works the same here."

"It was clear to me that the

community model offers much better care," Xie said. "Regular hospital doctors see 80 to 100 patients a day, spending from one to five minutes with each. This leaves little time for checking their medical history, and much less for developing any relationship with the patient."

That doctors are often forced to share consultation rooms while patients line up out the door only compounds the problem, he said.

"But in Haiyuncang, each doctor has a private office and sees one patient at a time. We see 20 to 30 patients a day, spend 10 to 25 minutes with each patient, review more detailed case histories and medications and are more likely to inquire about the psychosocial aspects of illness," he said.

Improved accesses

The success of the Haiyuncang health center has encouraged other jurisdictions to follow suit. Zhu Zonghan, director of the Beijing Municipal Health Bureau, said the model is now being copied throughout the city.

The bureau said there will be 250 centers throughout the city before the end of next year. The model has also spread to other cities like Shanghai.

Zhu said 47 hospital directors and 11 provincial health directors have visited the health center to see how it works.

"The reforms needed by China's health care system are very complex, but this project is a step in the right direction," Ma said.

Admin changes star ratings to clean up hotel industry

By Li Zhixin

The National Tourism Administration declared Monday that the country will begin closing down hotels that fail to meet a minimum star rating.

Du Jiang, deputy director general of tourism, said the administration plans to establish a supervisory system that would oversee star ratings and monitor customer satisfaction.

The plans would also reduce the re-evaluation period for five-star hotels from once every five years to once every three.

Du said the brand building, market influence and competitive strength of China's hotel industry lags far behind the West. "If the country wants to become a world tourism power, then it needs have reputable travel brands it can use to prop itself up," he said.

"The move to monitor third-party customer satisfaction is just conforming to current international practice," said Marcella Lau, sales director of China World Hotel. "Hotel ratings should not be based exclusively on how luxurious their facilities are. The new rating scheme would help to renew competition among those hotels with a five-star rating."

But she said the shortened reexamination period may increase the industry's workload.

A spokesman for the National Tourist Hotels Star-rating Committee said a new edition of the standard used when awarding star ratings has already been submitted to the National Standards Commission for approval.

The new system could be in effect by next January.

The committee dropped its star approval of the Chongqing Hilton last week when it was revealed that several shareholders and workers at the hotel were involved in the criminal underground. The hotel allegedly aided in the sheltering of trafficked women who were engaged in prostitution.

The National Tourism Administration said on its website that the hotel's actions seriously harmed the image of the country's tourist hotels.

The Chongqing Hilton was the second hotel to lose its star rating. The Jingxuan Hotel in Shenzhen lost its rating in 2007 when its facilities and services were found to be substandard.

Industry insiders have said the recent conference and the decision against the Chongqing Hilton are signs that the easy days are over for five-star hotels.

"They will no longer be able to rest on their star ratings. The new conditions will force five-star hotels to continually improve themselves," said Tina Luo, communications manager of Legendale Hotel.

College-bound rural students cling to peasant status

By Zhao Hongyi

"Peasants" have had a negative image for thousands of years. As China's poorest and least educated class they have received little – if any – money, social welfare, education and medical assistance.

Reforms started in 1978 made college education the only route by which rural students could escape poverty to win residence in a big city. That residency was the key to a better life and hereditary access to education and social welfare.

At least it used to be.

Today's mangled job market is turning this decades-old wisdom on its head.

Rural residence has found new value in the eyes of students whose futures seem doomed to unemployment. If they can't find jobs, they can at least have land.



At Beijing Normal University, both rural hukou holders and their peers are choosing to find work in the countryside in hopes of a better future.

CFP Photo

Rural hukou too valuable

Niu Yuan is a rural student attending Huairou Middle School. Like many of her peers, Niu took the national college entrance exam in early June.

This month, she received her letter of acceptance from Beijing University of Science and Technology: a document that could change her life.

A few years ago, Niu and her family would have bounded to the village police station to swap her rural hukou for one in the city. But after a long discussion, Niu and her family decided it was in her best interests to pass on this opportunity.

Niu is one of 11 university-bound students in her village to pass on city hukou.

In the whole of Liucun Town, of which Niu's village is a part, 80 percent of the 256 college-bound students have made the same decision.

"It's been a common choice for people in Beijing's suburbs during the last few years," Niu said. Students from peasant families in the districts of Shunyi, Huairou, Tongzhou, Fangshan and Yanqing are abandoning in droves what should be their ticket to success.

At the last gathering of her high school classmates, Niu found nearly two dozen of her peers made the same choice.

Hukou's hidden benefits

The reasons why students pass on what should be a golden opportunity are complex.

With the expansion and growth of Beijing, suburban land has become extremely valuable. "Many city residents have come to our village to rent land and build a house," Niu said.

In Niu's village, the rental price for one hectare of land rose this year from 9,000 yuan to 19,500 yuan per year. Further increases are expected.

Rural families who own homes are also waiting for developers, usually approved by local governments, to grab their land in exchange for spacious city apartments and millions of yuan in compensation.

"If I moved into the city, I would lose the chance to get that money," Niu explained. "What is the point of having residence in a city when you don't have an apartment or a good job with which to support yourself?"

Another advantage is profit distribution.

Villages are owned by the villagers, and urbanization is creating trickle-down income by way of land leases, development and tourism. This income is split evenly between the villagers as a year-end stipend.

Government efforts during the last decade have also provided most villagers some form of social welfare and insurance – though not necessarily up to big-city standards. Village committees also award their students with scholarships and other assistance when they go to college.

"Today, being a peasant is better than being a city resident," Niu said. "Why would I give up everything I have for a small salary?"

A system most broken

"The decisions these students are making with their families show the progress we have made over the years in bridging the gap between city and rural residents," said Xia Guangshao, an official from the Beijing Municipal Bureau of Human Resources and Social Welfare.

"Today, being a peasant is better than being a city resident. Why would I give up everything I have for a small salary?"

— Niu Yuan,
Beijing University of Science and Technology
from Huairou Middle School

But Li Yining, an economist and former president of Guanghua Economic Institute, Beijing University, noted there are still clear barriers. In a commentary published this week by *Beijing Daily*, Li urged the government end residency distinctions and its policy of applying different laws and policies to urban and rural residents.

In 1978, when economic reform first targeted dismantlement of urban and rural political distinctions, the system was designed to stimulate the economy and finally end discrimination against the peasant class, Li said.

"After three decades of reform we have yet to achieve that," he said in the article. "Fortunately, there has been progress."

He said government should give the peasants the right to choose where to live. Doing so would ensure social stability and allow more than 800 million people to decide their own destiny.

Sadly, Beijing is far from realizing these reforms.

In provinces like Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Hubei and Liaoning, and cities like Shanghai and Shenzhen, local governments have already dismantled many of the restrictions on rural hukou holders.

The Shanghai municipal government went a step further. Villagers can enjoy the same pension payouts and medical insurance as city residents as long as they pay into these welfare programs at the same rate as their urban

peers for seven years.

But rather than open the floodgates for rural-urban migration, city residents are instead migrating to the countryside in their search for work in a tough job market.

Downsides don't dissuade

But Xia, the bureau official, said it's worrying that many of the students passing on city hukou are missing the bigger picture.

"Many of these students are doing it because they see the cost of land going up and think it will be a chance to get easy money," he said. "I think they need to pay more attention to the disadvantages of staying in the countryside."

These bear traps include pensions, medical treatment and

unemployment.

While China has made dramatic progress in expanding its social welfare program to the countryside, the urban and rural areas are still operating on two different systems.

City residents enjoy a higher percentage of medical reimbursement for clinic visits and surgery. Peasants, due to the low prices they pay for their insurance packages, are only partially covered for surgery and are given much less reimbursement.

Pension systems have similar differences. City residents receive higher pensions after retiring because they pay more into the system. Villagers are given only the absolute minimum because they pay much less while working.

"These welfare systems have been designed this way for a long time. A lot of students think they will be able to enjoy the best of both systems after graduation, but that's not realistic," he said.

"Most of the employers request candidates with city residence because it is less of a hassle to arrange their social welfare payments," said Qian Li, an official at the recruiting office at the Beijing University of Technology.

That means if you are a city resident, it will be much easier to find a job, she said.

But Niu said she doesn't care. "I would rather hang onto my houses and land. Those are more important in a world where graduation means unemployment," Niu said.

"It's quite possible that I'll go back to my village to find work. By then, who knows how many new opportunities I'll have."

Programming under the Apple tree

By Wang Yu

The iPhone 4 is out in the US, and China's Apple fans are preparing for yet another round of fierce upgrades. But China does more than simply build the hardware that guarantees the Cupertino gurus their massive profits: it also builds the software.

The launch of the App Store in July 2008 gave many Chinese developers a new avenue to establish their mobile software businesses and win profits overseas.

iPhone development is not terribly difficult – most Apps require more creativity than programming prowess. But after two years, it is becoming more and more difficult for new startups to stand out in a store that has grown saturated with similar products.

Campus beginnings

In 2003, Zhu Lianxing was bitten by the business bug.

He left his job selling IP phone charge cards and popular gadgets in Baoding, Hebei Province, and headed for the capital with dreams of changing the way people communicate.

Founding a company to deliver voice-over Internet protocol (VoIP) phone service was a new adventure for the Hebei University graduate. The popular technology, used today in clients like Skype, Team Speak and Ekiga, enables users to speak to each other using a standard Internet connection.

While government restrictions on the technology brought his company to a swift end, the experience he earned during his two years at the startup would be invaluable.

Disappointed by his failure in Beijing, Zhu returned to Baoding, where he took an interest in Texas Hold'em, the popular poker game. Together with Hebei University students Gu Gengxin and Wu Yifan, the three rented a hotel room across from the school to use as an office while they developed China's first Texas Hold'em platform.

Things were going well for their startup, 139.me. Then the law stepped in.

Because the government considers all forms of Texas Hold'em to be gambling, Zhu's software fell into an area too gray for the Chinese market.

But new hope came in the form of the App Store.

"There were about 15 million iPhone users in the world and only 1,500 applications," Zhu said, recalling his enthusiasm at the 2008 opening of the iPhone's software platform. The group quickly reworked its Texas Hold'em game to work on the iPhone and put it up for sale.

Today, 139.me is one of China's top developers of iPhone Apps. The company's 20 employees are spread out between Baoding and Beijing and its software has been downloaded by 3 million users. Its new Zhongguancun office, opened January 1 to recruit from universities, is opposite the building where Zhu worked as a VoIP developer in 2003.

139.me's products range in price from \$0 to \$99. As one of the first App vendors, the company has built a reputation as the country's best App developer: that brand helps its products stand out in the App Store.

"(This success) was possible on Apple's platform, where the cost of producing a program is low and there is no need to budget for promotion," Zhu said.

New developers are required to register an iPhone Development Program (iDP) account and pay \$99 (670 yuan) per year for access to the software development kit (SDK).

Completed software is uploaded to Apple with an asking price, after which – pending approval – it will appear in the App Store within two weeks. Developers are given a 70 percent cut of each sale.

Apps born in China

"I think people see the App Store as such a great platform for young developers because it is fair. You face the buyers directly and your income is determined by the quality of your product," Zhu said.

This is a major break from the old model, where small companies ended up buried when they were not actively promoted by sellers.

"Here, it's the buyers who decide everything,"

Zhu said.

Chen Xi, chief manager of Shangze Technology, a Shanghai-based electronic book and magazine producer, said there are at least 1,000 software companies developing for the App Store.

While a few of the larger developers can earn 5 million yuan per month, as many as 80 percent of Apps end up buried and never sell, said Su Zhen, chief manager of Tangram Mobile Entertainment, a mobile game company in Tianjin.

Su graduated from Tianjin University in 1998 and was one of the country's first mobile phone game programmers. He made his first game on Nokia's 9210, an early smart phone, in 2002.

At that time, Handango was the most popular platform for selling mobile phone games.

"On Handango, you shared profits with the site. A good game could earn around \$20,000 (136,000 yuan), but the development costs were high. Making a good game could cost 50,000 yuan."

Handango priced most of its games for about \$7 – the App Store average, by contrast, is \$2. Su said this price drop is causing quality to plummet as many small developers engage in a race to the bottom.



On October 30, 2009, Apple officially released iPhone and its APP Store in China. CFP Photo

However, the App Store does have a place for pricier products.

One of 139.me's latest software packages, a translator that supports 14 languages and speech, was sold at the App Store for \$99.90 despite in-house disagreement. Most competing translation packages cost \$40.

That high price attracted many users who were curious what application could cost so much. First-day sales exceeded \$1,000, and the company followed up with single-language translators for \$9.99.

"Though there are a huge number of products at the App Store, hundreds are clones and few are really excellent," Zhu said. Most App shoppers are eager to spend, and the market still offers potential for individual developers with new ideas.

The key word being "new."

"Copiers can never succeed. Having a good, original product is only the first step. You also need a solid business model that can evolve with the market," Chen said. His company has made Apps for 40 Chinese magazines and newspapers and receives 3 million downloads every month.

But those downloads make up only a fraction of Chen's income, much of which comes from selling advertising space.

That's because Chinese App developers face the same problem as their peers in the PC industry: Chinese people don't like paying for software.

"Even if they wanted to, actually paying would



Zhu Lianxing says his success can only be copied in a fair market like APP Store.

Photo by Song Nannan

be a problem. The App Store requires buyers to use a credit card, but most Chinese iPhone owners don't have one. The iPhone is also considered a minority handset here," Zhu said.

"About 99 percent of our products go to overseas iPhones. The US makes up 40 percent of our sales and Europe is another 20 percent," Zhu said.

A viable domestic market for Apps may be a long way off.

A new platform

139.me's most popular program is Colorful Aquarium. Released last June, the \$2.99 App allows users to create a virtual aquarium by choosing fish and seaweed. The game earns the company about \$1,000 a day, and its iPad port was used in an official iPad promotion.

Of course, App sales are not its only source of income. The company has built a name for itself in the outsourcing business, developing engines for China Mobile, China Unicom, Lenovo and the China Central Academy of Fine Arts.

"The App Store has become a whole industry, and selling isn't the only way to survive in it," Zhu said.

"In this 3G era, we need to focus on bigger applications for smart phone users instead of traditional consumer products. The industry is booming, and single producers like us cannot keep up with the demand," Zhu said.

To recruit more talent, 139.me launched a new project called 3G Dream Works. The college-based program is intended to attract computer science students to the company where they can gain experience working with professional programmers.

Tuition is need at first, but Zhu likened the organization more to a student union than a training program. Participating students will work with 139.me on some of the company's outsourcing projects after their training period.

Zhu hopes the project, first initiated at Hebei University, will make students a new power in the industry.

"At first it was free, but then we saw a lot of students dropping out after the training. Now we only charge a fraction of the tuition and allow students to pay off the rest by working. We hope to attract more students in Jiangsu, Guangzhou and Beijing after summer vacation," Zhu said.

According to the latest mobile Internet report by Morgan Stanley analyst Mary Meeker, the mobile Internet market will outgrow the desktop Internet within three to five years. But domestic companies may have to be patient as 3G portable device are still not in general use.

"I think that even now we don't have that many people programming for mobile devices. But as Meeker reported, that may change very soon. The golden age of mobile Internet is about to begin," Zhu said.

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Behind espionage

Chery's spy charge shows growing pains for Chinese automakers



Chery cars on display. Chery International is one of the nation's largest automakers.

IC Photo

In the latest flurry of industrial espionage cases, a Chinese American couple has been accused of stealing \$40 million worth of trade secrets from General Motors and selling them to a Chinese carmaker.

Experts say the espionage betrays the difficulties Chinese carmakers face as they ponder global expansion.

GM espionage saga

Shashan Du, 51, and her husband Yu Qin, 49, appeared in federal court last Thursday to be arraigned on charges punishable by 20 years imprisonment and heavy fines.

The couple, who has been under investigation since 2006, is charged with four crimes including conspiracy to possess trade secrets without authorization, unauthorized possession of trade secrets and wire fraud.

The documents allegedly stolen and sold involved GM's research into its hybrid vehicles, according to court documents. GM estimates the value of the stolen documents to be close to \$40 million.

According to the federal indictment obtained by ABC News, between December 2003 to May 2006, Du, a former GM employee, allegedly uploaded a

confidential GM document entitled "Hybrid Electric Drive System" and saved thousands of pages of sensitive GM trade information relating to hybrid vehicles onto a hard drive.

Du then allegedly used her GM email account to relay the information to her husband Qin, who is accused of using it to benefit Millennium Technology International, a company the couple owns together.

Months later, Qin supposedly approached Chery Automobile, a China-based automotive manufacturer and GM competitor, to sell the new hybrid technology.

The alleged theft forced GM to upgrade its security system.

Chery unaware of theft

Chery Automobile, however, denied the charges Monday and said it was unaware of the US case.

"We had no idea about this

issue until we read about in the media," Jin Yibo, spokesman for Chery, was quoted by Reuters as saying.

"It seems strange to us and we don't understand why Chery's name is being linked to this matter."

In a statement released Tuesday, Chery said it has always been committed to observing the rules governing intellectual property (IP) protection set by the international community.

"Chery has obtained more than 4,000 patents for core technologies, including whole vehicle, engines, gearbox and new energies, thanks to its own R&D capability," the statement said.

IPR disputes

The case comes at a time when Chinese automakers try to buy brands and technology from Western companies amid industry turmoil.

Analysts are warning Chinese

automakers to take intellectual property rights more seriously when competing with their foreign counterparts, as the Chinese firms are vying for more market share worldwide.

John Zeng, a senior market analyst with the Asian Automotive Forecast Service at IHS Global Insight, was quoted by *Global Times* as saying that foreign media and companies have long been biased against China and Chinese companies.

"Whenever China or Chinese companies make progress in technology, their foreign counterparts accuse China or Chinese companies of stealing," he said.

Zeng warned that the number of such cases involving the alleged theft of tech secrets in the auto industry will increase as China's auto industry continues to expand.

(Agencies)

Weight loss giants prepare to fight fat in China

By Huang Daohen

With Chinese waistlines expanding as fast as the cost of real estate, global companies peddling easy alternatives to hard work at the gym are circling for the kill.

Simon Zhang was one of the first targets.

As an only child growing up in Beijing, Zhang was raised on a diet rich in candy, ice cream and McDonald's. Now tipping the scales at more than 100 kilograms, the 26-year-old has decided to join Weight Watchers, the US weight loss agency.

"I will end up having a heart attack if I keep gaining weight like this," said Zhang, who is 175 centimeters tall. His target weight is 65 kilograms.

Being overweight or obese in a national health concern is most big cities. According to Body Mass Index measurements from World Health Organization (WHO), Chinese adults are getting fatter faster than those in any nation aside from Mexico.

Current estimates show that 23 percent of the nation's 1.3 billion people are overweight or obese, according to the WHO index.

In metropolises like Beijing and Shanghai, the problem is acute among children. About 40 percent of boys in Beijing struggle with their weight.

But Zhang found Weight Watchers draws more girls than boys. "Many Chinese people are not fat enough," said Lucia Xie, a senior educator at Weight Watchers. "Many young women think their weight is a big problem, even if they look tiny."

Xie, who also completed research on obesity in China, said the country's obesity problem differs significantly from the problem in the US. "In much of the West, obesity is a problem of the poor," she said. "In the US and UK, rich people won't go to places like McDonald's."

"But in China, it is the middle class and the wealthy who have a passion for fried chicken," she said.

"A sedentary lifestyle is another problem," Xie said. "Currently, Chinese culture is more sedentary the higher your position in society. People don't really jog here. The idea is to get off a bicycle, not onto one."

Xie said Weight Watchers has created a program for Chinese customers, offering diet plans and weight loss programs tailored to the local market.

The company recently opened four branches in Shanghai in a joint venture with Danone, the French food group.

Young people's desires to lose weight and achieve a healthier lifestyle are also creating demand for low-fat foods.

Sales of weight loss products rose 10 percent in 2008 to 6 billion yuan, Xinhua News Agency reported. The report said that the market is expected to grow 6 percent annually for the next five years.

Analysis

Beatings for the new kid

By Huang Daohen

Regardless of whether Chery had a hand in the GM espionage case, the company won't be the last Chinese carmaker whose name is dragged through the mud on such charges, said Wen Yijun, a senior industrial analyst with Oriental Securities.

"It is like growing pains for the country's automakers," Wen said.

Other domestic carmakers such as Geely and Great Wall have also been charged with commercial espionage and IP theft. Some lost their lawsuits in the US and Europe and are now having their exports restricted.

Disputes aside, Wen said it's true that Chinese car designers have it tough even though they produce for the world's largest car market.

The industry has no shortage of well-educated auto designers, Wen said. But the prevalent design philosophies leave most of the best ideas tied up in academia.

Wen said there is a joke in auto circles: an auto executive told his designers that the competitive advantage Chinese car designers have over their foreign competitors is that their designs never have to start from a blank sheet of paper.

The standard practice for many auto sellers is to identify the most popular model and copy it as much as possible.

But in that joke there is some truth, Wen said. Domestic companies remain infantile in their approach to business even as they ponder going abroad. Their habitual plagiarism, usually ignored at home, is the root of many nasty lawsuits that have cast a negative shadow over all Chinese cars.

"I think eventually they'll figure out how to do something original. Their copying may help them to get a feel for what works and what doesn't," Wen said.

South Korea's Hyundai got its start by copying Morris Marina, and Japan's Nissan started off copying the CKD Austin Cambridge.

"It has nothing to do with culture. It is just part of the development process. Germany went through it, Japan went through it and Korea went through it," Wen said.

People laughed at the Hyundai when it first showed up on US shores, but today the Koreans command a significant market share.

"Chinese cars are the joke today. We'll see if that's still true in 10 years," Wen said.

Why are Chinese passengers so angry about flight delays?

By Zhang Dongya

Whether due to weather conditions or aircraft failure, a rash of flights have been delayed in recent weeks. Many of the delays were unavoidable, but the way the airlines have dealt with the incidents has been controversial. The tension between airlines and passengers has stirred much online discussion.

About 50 passengers who were upset about their flight's 26-hour delay refused to disembark when they landed in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, *News Express Daily* reported Wednesday.

The China Southern flight should have departed Nantong, Jiangsu province, at 1:10 pm Monday, but plane failure made it impossible.

A passenger surnamed Jiang said the airline company changed the departure time four times. Some passengers demanded a ticket refund but were rebuffed. The passengers got angrier when they realized the aircraft they were eventually herded into was not the original; they reasoned that the company should have put them in a different plane earlier.

The company arranged lodging and accommodations for the passengers and proposed to compensate each passenger 200 yuan,

but passengers refused out of principle. The flight took off at 3:40 pm the next day and landed at 6 pm.

In another case, a Shandong Airlines flight from Chengdu to Qingdao was forced to land in Chongqing due to a storm on July 24. When the plane was ready to depart 12 hours later, many passengers refused to board. The company said they decided to offer compensation, even though the airline didn't have to because the delay was weather-related.

Airliners aren't always to blame. On July 18, a typhoon delayed a Hainan Airline flight for seven hours. A video clip made the rounds on the Internet showing an airline employee kneeling in front of passengers and apologizing.

"The flight is going to depart now, but we have 37 passengers who haven't checked in," the employee said. "For those of you, I apologize again."

When the passengers still refused to check in, the man knelt down. One female passenger cried, "It won't work! We have already waited seven hours. We demand compensation!"

Many of the complaining passengers said what irritated them most was the company's failure to communicate the problem.

Comment

More information and services needed

According to present regulations, airlines should compensate passengers when a flight is delayed due to malfunction or delayed more than four hours. For conventional postponements due to weather problems, they do not need to compensate anyone. As a result, when there are flight delays, airlines are reluctant to reveal the cause. Passengers are often left in the dark for hours, even an entire day. Companies should try to offer more information so passengers can show more understanding.

— Tommy Yin, student at Hunan University of Science and Technology

Kneeling only showed incompetence

China very much values etiquette, with kneeling being the most extreme of behaviors. Kneeling to apologize is sincere, signaling that one is willing to ask for forgiveness at the cost of his dignity. However, kneeling in this situation wasn't appropriate. Angry passengers who have lost their patience will not properly interpret this gesture. What they need is a reasonable explanation and proper compensation. The response of the company only showed its incompetence and helplessness. Of course, it was not just one airline's fault, but a breakdown of the entire system.

— Ling Yuzeng, reporter for Civil Aviation Administration of China Journal

Spoiled passengers

I make business trips by air very frequently. It is

understandable to be anxious and irritated during delays, but there are always trouble-makers who demand unreasonable compensation from the airline companies.

One time, after a flight was delayed for hours, the company offered to compensate passengers 100 yuan each. But passengers would not accept the offer until the company raised the compensation to 300 yuan. Companies should stop compromising and spoiling their passengers.

— Cuinanyan, netizen on News.carnoc.com

Foreign airline companies more rational

It is very common to see flights from foreign airlines delayed, but passengers on those flights never get as frustrated. One reason for that I think is because foreign companies have developed rational ways of dealing with these incidents — they compensate according to regulations. Foreign passengers will not make trouble because they know that it will not solve their problems and that no matter what they do, the airline will respond only according to regulations. If you are not satisfied with the company's response, you can file a lawsuit later.

However, domestic airline companies lack effective mechanisms to cope with delayed flights. They rely on their employees, so many unfortunate incidents will emerge, thus encouraging more passenger disgruntlement in the future.

— Anna Liu, employee of KLM Dutch Airline

Debate of the week

No more 'shame parades'

Gone are the days of shackling prostitutes and parading them in public and posting their mug shots and home addresses on the Internet.

The Ministry of Public Security finally issued an edict ordering police around the country to stop publicly shaming prostitutes and their johns.

According to a Ministry of Public Security circular issued on Monday, provincial security departments must absolutely not do anything that undermines human dignity — prostitute parades, for instance — in their efforts to crack down on prostitution.

How rational, calm and civilized. And how belated, considering public opinion had turned against this practice years ago.

The rule comes in the wake of last year's plethora of controversial "public shaming" incidents along with the illegal sex workers it allegedly caught. Many of those incidents backfired dramatically, with ordinary citizens horrified by the brutal tactics police used on both the girls and the johns.

In one widely reported incident last October, police officers pulled a panicked woman's hair so her face appeared on camera, yelling at her to answer how many men she'd slept with that night. They then posted photos of her online and had them broadcast on television.

Netizens were outraged, and an online survey found that only 8 percent of respondents felt the police had handled the situation correctly.

Much more recently, Guangdong police in Dongguan came under fire after they released pictures of handcuffed and barefoot prostitutes being led through the streets by rope. Dongguan police quickly backtracked, arguing that they hadn't meant to publicly shame anyone and that this was just standard protocol.

But the public has opposed public shaming since at least 2006, when citizens expressed outrage over a prostitute parade in Shenzhen. The event caused one Shanghai lawyer, Yao Jianguo, to write an open letter to the National People's Congress saying that such actions are not only disrespectful to individual dignity but also unlawful.

Like most edicts related to Public Security Bureau tactics, the ministry doesn't go into detail about what it will do if it finds out that public shaming has occurred, besides that it will "investigate the matter and deal with it accordingly."

But for now, at least, sex workers will not be forced to walk the streets in shackles, and that's something.

(By Elaine Chow, editor of Shanghaiist.com)



Passengers wait for flights at an airport in Qingdao, Shandong province, on May 18 after the airport was closed due to heavy rain.

IC Photo



The little twins in 2003

By Han Manman

Peter Golder, an American professor, said adopting twins from China 11 years ago was the best thing he ever did. The girls have brought him and his family much happiness.

The Golder family is lucky. For many foreign families who want to adopt from China, the process has become much trickier than before.

As a result, the number of Chinese children adopted by Americans has dropped sharply, reaching its lowest level since 1999.

Adopted twins seek their Chinese roots



Seeking roots

The Golder family just returned to the US last week after a month-long trip in China. As a visiting professor at the Guanghua School of Management in Peking University, Golder and his wife have decided to take their adopted Chinese twins to China every three years for the girls to see the rapid changes of their motherland. This summer was the second of their trips.

During the trip, the family traveled to Dalian, Shanghai, Fujian and Wuhan. While much has changed – there are fewer bicycles and more skyscrapers – a constant has been the warm reception the family has received from Chinese people everywhere, Golder said. Whenever they traveled, people would want to talk to them and learn more about them.

"People in China always want to know our story," he said. "They are attracted by the twins, as seeing adopted twins with foreign parents is unusual."

He added that the encounters are always positive, and that the Chinese often give him and his family a thumbs up.

"Even though our conversations are so basic, we are all happy to share our experiences," Golder said. "We want the girls to be familiar with China and to be comfortable with being Chinese."

An exciting gift – twins

Golder and his wife adopted the twins in 1999 from an orphanage in Wuhan. "Both my wife and I are very interested in China's history and culture, and I also have many students from China who I like very much," Golder said, adding that he asked for



The Golder family in Beijing.

Photos provided by Peter Golder

twins because he didn't want his child growing up alone.

He applied with an adoption agency in the US, which told them it would be possible to adopt twins – a rarity in Chinese orphanages.

Golder and his wife flew directly to Beijing's China Center of Adoption Affairs, which then connected the couple with the children. "They looked so lovely," Golder said of when he first laid eyes on the twins. At that time, the girls were 14 months old.

Back in the US, the girls quickly adjusted to their surroundings. Golder also learned a few Chinese phrases, including the all-important, "I am your father."

Immersion into American society

To facilitate assimilation into American culture, the family chose to live in Manhattan, New York, until 2009 and participate in a group called Families with Children from China.

"It's better for them to meet friends who are in similar situations," Golder said, adding that the group gave the twins the chance to make a lot of friends.

Golder said the twins probably knew they were Chinese when they were three years old. "It's important for them to know that they are from China and to know that country," he said.

As for their future, Golder

Foreign families have found it harder to adopt children from China in recent years. CFP Photo

said it all depends on them. "If they decide that someday they want to live in China, we will support their choice. They have the freedom to do what they want," he said.

"When they were very young, before they really understood, they once said they would go to China, and I told them, 'OK, make that move, and if you do, I'll buy a house next to you,'" Golder said.

Foreign adoptions drop sharply

Golder said he feels lucky he adopted the twins when he did, because today it is nearly impossible.

American families adopted just over 3,000 Chinese children in 2009, down more than 60 percent from four years earlier, according to the US State Department.

One reason for this rapid decline is because China has tightened its adoption rules and the procedure is now more complicated, Golder said.

China's international adoption program, which opened in 1992, has always been popular. But the country introduced stricter restrictions in 2007, making it so that only heterosexual, married couples could apply for adoption. The government stipulated that couples had to be between the ages of 30 and 50, married for at least two years, and be able to prove they own at least \$80,000 in assets. If one of the spouses has had a divorce, then the couple must have been married for at least five years.

Another reason for the drop in foreign adoptions is an increasing number of Chinese families have begun adopting children, according to Xu Anqi, a sociologist at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

Xu said as Chinese people have grown more educated, they've begun to realize the values and benefits of raising a child supersede bloodlines.

"China's economy has grown rapidly, and Chinese are richer than before. More families without children have developed the desire to adopt because they can afford it," Xu said.

In 1996, about 19,000 Chinese couples sought adoption; by 2008, that number had jumped to 42,000. There are, however, restrictions on Chinese families as well. Chinese couples have to be married, 35 or older, have no other children and be financially stable, Xu said.

Golder said another reason for decreasing adoption rates is because fewer children are being put in orphanages, adding that China's perception of girls has changed dramatically in recent years. Girls make up about 95 percent of children at orphanages, according to the Chinese Children Adoption International in Centennial, Colorado, because in the past couples have abandoned girls to try to have a son.

"No matter who adopts, Chinese families or foreign, the main thing is to make sure the children have a good home, either in China or elsewhere," Golder said.

Freeze frame: capturing the moment in ever-changing Beijing



Alessandro Vecchi

By Chu Meng

"Normal Status of Beijing," a photo exhibition by Italian expat Alessandro Vecchi, opened in the Italian Embassy Cultural Institute this week and will run until the end of August.

Through 16 photos of the most ordinary local residents, the photographer hopes to capture present-day memories of a city quickly and permanently changing on the road of modernization.

Explaining why he chose to take pictures of Beijing, an oft-documented city, Vecchi, who has lived here for three years, said, "My China will never be the same China of a Chinese person, and it would never be the same of an American or a South African, even if we take pictures of exactly the same things."

He believes that the same object viewed differently contains different meanings, even seen by non-photographers. "A hamburger appears to be a dead animal to a vegetarian, but a delicious meal to someone else," he said.



Alessandro Vecchi works with his camera.

Photos provided by Alessandro Vecchi

Vecchi has been to nearly 400 cities around the world – he keeps track by circling them on a map in his home in Italy – and each new city offers him a fresh perspective. Vecchi, in presenting everyday life – including pollution and the demolition of hutong – is trying to tell people what they're taking for granted in the name of progress.

"It would be presumptuous of me to say there was a need for my point of view," Vecchi said. "Thinking about the past can be useful, but don't get lost in nostalgia. Accepting the present and moving accordingly is, in my

opinion, the key to the future."

In much the same way that journalists "steal" the stories of their subjects, Vecchi calls himself "a soul stealer" because a successful photo is one that will never be forgotten – a moment reified, while souls are supposed to be ephemeral. "When you decide to tell a story through an image, you decide to put yourself between you and your subject, you and your journey."

Vecchi's exhibition will run concurrently with a presentation by the Italian Photography Institute called "Exposure." Photographers featured in this exhibition

are students that Vecchi met during a photography project 18 months ago, "In Blood We Trust," which aimed to capture ethnic minorities in southeastern China.

"They are all Italians that are interested in both Chinese culture and photography," said Vecchi, who taught them the basics of professional photography, his understanding of Chinese culture and ways to communicate with locals.

He will teach another two-month course beginning in September that he said will be open to all nationalities.

Trade agreement tightens ties between Chinese and Peruvian businessmen

By Chu Meng

With the China-Peru Free Trade Agreement (FTA), initiated in March, in full force, the expected export volume from Peru to China is expected to reach 102 billion yuan within five years, Peruvian ambassador Harold Forsyth said Monday at Peru's Independence Day celebration in Beijing.

Chinese consumers can find fresh Peruvian grapes, juice, seafood and bovine fiber, Forsyth said, as this season is the best for all those products. And as the bilateral trade deepens, more provisions, investments and services from Peru will be available in China in the near future.

"The agreement is an opportunity to build more partnerships between Peruvian and Chinese businesspeople, which will be the main players during its implementation," Forsyth said.

"It shows that both China and Peru are professional and mature negotiators," he added. "We would also like to see more Peruvian movies in Chinese theaters, for the agreement also includes articles on cultural elements."

Currently, China is Peru's second largest trade partner worldwide, and Peru is China's seventh largest trade partner in South America. In 2008, the total volume of exports of the two countries reached 50 billion yuan, 10 times the number in 2007.

"The total volume of exports in 2009 has not been calculated yet, but it should be more or less similar to the numbers in 2008, despite the global financial crisis," said Jorge China, economic and commercial counselor in the Peruvian embassy.

Forsyth said that Chinese entrepreneurs can trust the Peruvian economy because it has one of the best macro-economic structures in Latin America, it employs a floating exchange rate, exercises fiscal discipline and has a well-supervised banking sector.

Some experts remain skeptical of the agreement.

"It is easy to swear by free trade but hard to follow its rules," said Xiao Chen, professor of international economics and trade at Peking University. "Even if free trade is a mutually beneficiary and multi-win game, there will be tough negotiations on prices among different sectors. That is why the question, 'Who will gain more from the trade?' leads to endless bargaining among traders. Everybody loves it but no one wants to go there early."

'Serious' small-game developer gives advice to young entrepreneurs

By Liang Meilan

In today's hyper-connected world, China's youth have been ambitious about setting up small-game enterprises. But they can do more, said award-winning game developer Jeremiah Alexander, who thinks small-game companies should think about tailoring their products for serious issues.

Alexander, the 2010 International Young Interactive Entrepreneur award winner, is owner and director of Ideonic, a games development studio in England. He is a self-described game developer with a great sense of social responsibility. "I'd like to call our games 'serious games' – the application of game design and technology for non-entertainment sectors," he said.

A computer games programming major at the University of Teesside from 2002 to 2006, Alexander initially used his studio to create sports games and 3D instructionals. Eventually, Alexander dedicated himself to making a language and culture learning game called Guanxi.

"At the inception phase, no one was willing to invest in my program because I had few contacts and the new idea seemed unconvincing," he said. "So I had



Jeremiah Alexander (right)

Photo provided by British Council in China

to borrow money to finish the first model."

The game's originality and effectiveness eventually convinced the British Bank to finance Alexander's next program about teaching youth how to manage their money. His business soon swelled, giving him the capital to develop further.

Alexander said that social networking sites such as Facebook, Foursquare and Renren are ideal for start-up game devel-

opers. "It is a two-way communication model," he said. "With the platform, our games get played by more and more people. In return, more and more information, such as the ages and hobbies of our players, are collected, which will help us make more customized games."

One of Alexander's team's successful games is Mirror Me, a Facebook app that debuted last December. It allows users to take photos, enter some information

about their lifestyles, then watch their faces morph into degenerated future forms. Users can then share the images with friends.

"The game is aimed at encouraging youth to live a healthier life," Alexander said. "We want to encourage people to change their ways of living."

The application won the 2010 MediaGuardian Innovation Award (Mega), and a version for iPhone just became available on July 12.

Another piece of advice Alexander had for start-ups was to build relationships with stakeholders and share development ideas with them. "Two important collaborators with Ideonic are the mobile phone developers and the education consultancy companies," he said. "We consider them not only as clients but also as our think tank."

Alexander also said that for lots of startups, an overemphasis on originality might actually be a hindrance. "The gaming industry never lacks creativity," he said. "Though originality is key to success in the long run, expecting too much originality at the beginning and spending too much time on it may hinder the progress of the company."

JA China teaches teens recipe to successful business

By Huang Daohen

GaGa Company is determined to succeed in a crowded, recessionary manufacturing industry. Huang Siyan, CEO of GaGa, said her company will double its sales goal this year and pay a dividend to shareholders.

But unlike other high-tech companies, GaGa does not have a manufacturing plant or even an office. What it has right now is only an idea.

The company, composed of 10 high school students from across the nation, competed last week against 10 other groups in the 2010 Youth Enterprise Summer Camp. While the team didn't take home the trophy, the experience itself was a win.

The camp, co-organized by Junior Achievement (JA) China and HSBC, aims to provide a platform where teens can practice turning a business idea into reality with the help of local business leaders.

As many as 100 students from more than 40 top high schools in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Jinan, Chengdu and Shenzhen participated in the camp.

During the event, students formed teams, then started their own "company" with the guidance of volunteer entrepreneurs. Participants learned to make business decisions, create innovative products and weather the company's ups and downs with their teammates.

GaGa Company chose to sell products that would protect the human body from radiation, saying such goods have become increasingly in demand in recent years but that there are few quality products in the market, said Huang Siyan in a statement.

Though Dream X B Company emerged on top, Huang, 16, was named the camp's Most Promising Future Entrepreneur. "The three-day camp was an unforgettable jour-

ney in my life," Huang said. "We learned that product innovation requires not only creativity and an adventurous spirit, but also careful market research and a detailed marketing plan."

Paul Chou, President of JA China who also chaired the competition's judging panel, said the objective of the event was to develop business awareness and entrepreneurship among high school students in the country.

"Training future entrepreneurs has been JA's signature program for decades," Chou said. "And we will be bringing more educational programs to Chinese youth."

Before the competition, participants joined the JA Economics Program, which teaches basic economic theory and how to run a business. To date, some 12,000 high school students have participated in the Economics Program.

Sino-Japan competition starts muay Thai tournaments

By Zhang Dongya

The professional muay Thai tournament China Hero opened in Ordos, Inner Mongolia, last Sunday with matches between Japan and China.

Chinese fighter Liu Zhonghua won the only Mixed Martial Arts contest, while two of his countrymen and a Japanese fighter dominated the three K-1 matches, a kick-boxing competition.

"I hope the tournament will promote Sino-Japanese communication," Japan's coach, Hiroyuki Iwakuma, said in a press release. "Through the competition, we also want to exhibit the Japanese fighting spirit and karate techniques." Both China and Japan entered five fighters in last weekend's tournament.

The China Hero series, which aims to bring together the world's best professional muay Thai fighters, will hold five more tournaments in the country this year. In the next four months, Chinese fighters will face opponents from Thailand, South Korea, the US and Russia in matches to be held in Tianjin, Xi'an, Guangzhou and Shanghai. The best fighters from each country will take the ring in Beijing in December.

All 20 members of the Chinese team were hand-picked from groups in Guang-



Photo provided by Black Tiger Hero

A Chinese fighter won China Hero's Mixed Martial Arts contest.

dong, Hunan and Shandong provinces.

China Hero is organized by King of the Cage, the world's top Mixed Martial Arts competition, which originated in southern California, and Black Tiger Club Hero, the only place in Beijing that offers professional muay Thai training.

Last year, they also sponsored Bat-

tlefield X1 "Supremacy," the Chinese capital's first professional muay Thai competition, which drew 20 fighters from seven countries.

Black Tiger, founded last year by Vince Soberano, an eight-time world champion from the US, opened its second branch at Workers' Stadium this month.

Event

Summer Latin festival

Phoenix Dance Company is organizing a four-day Latin festival, which includes the theatrical show *For the Love of Salsa*, featuring 20 world-class dancers and musicians. The festival is also presenting workshops by New York dance instructor Sekou McMiller, which is open to all levels. For festival schedule and ticket prices, visit phoenix-dance.com.

Where: Phoenix Dance Company, Room 1701, Building 4, 15 Zhenzhi Lu, Chaoyang District

When: July 29 - August 1, 9 am - 11 pm

Tel: 13910975179

Cost: 50-360 yuan

Talk: Broadway in Beijing

Legendary Tony award-winning playwright David Henry Hwang, who wrote *Madame Butterfly*, and award-winning director Leigh Silverman will discuss their collaborations on and off Broadway at Capital M tomorrow. Hwang and Silverman recently worked together on *Yellow Face*, a humorous memoir of Hwang's 20-year search for his Chinese-American identity, and which earned two Off-Broadway Theater (OBIE) Awards and was short-listed for the 2008 Pulitzer Prize. The talk will be moderated by Ken Smith, performing arts critic for the *Financial Times*.

Where: Capital M, 3/F, 2 Qianmen Buxing Jie, Dongcheng District

When: July 31, 4-6 pm

Tel: 6702 2727

Cost: 65 yuan

Short Films on Indonesian Reform Era

Electric Shadows, a Beijing organization committed to the promotion of public cinema, will be presenting the 9808 Anthology in August. The event will feature 10 independent short films to commemorate the post-Suharto Indonesian Reform era (1998-2008).

Where: Penghao Theater, 35 Dongmianhua Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: August 1, 2-4 pm

Tel: 6400 6472

Cost: 30 yuan, 27 yuan for members

(By Liang Meilan)

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Chaoyang Park opens treetop adventure zone



Chaoyang Park's treetop adventure zone is only the second of its kind in the city.

Photo provided by GoApe Park

By Wang Yu

Fans of *Avatar*'s jungle action sequences will delight in Chaoyang Park's new GoApe Tree-top Adventure zone opened last Saturday.

The course is made up of ladders, bridges, swings, nets, trapezes and giant zip lines that allow people to weave their way through the wooded area. Participants, dressed in protective gear and attached to safety lines, can swing from tree to tree and zip over trees and streams.

Anybody from ages 5 to 70 can run the course, which is divided into low, medium and high levels of difficulty. It usually takes one to two hours to complete the course, said the Chaoyang Park management.

For the next 12 months, the park will note the fastest time that groups of three and six can navigate the course. Those that finish the quickest will receive a prize.

Participants will be given a safety brief-

ing by instructors, and inexperienced participants need to start with the easy route, the park management said. All its instructors, the park said, have completed a week-long training program, which includes first aid and rescue techniques.

The installations and protective equipment will also be checked every day to ensure safety. In addition, the course and its operating procedures will be independently inspected once a year by a specialist in engineering and risk management. Generali China Insurance will also provide insurance to course participants.

Happy Gorilla Tree-Top Adventure, builder and operator of the eco-adventure zone, constructed China's first such course in Shunyi District's Green Resort last year. The course may be a novelty to Chinese people, but it has been a common feature of European adventure parks since the 1990s.

Chaoyang Park's course follows Euro-

pean design and safety standards, the park management said, adding that before construction began, tree experts such as Professor Zhang Zhiyi from Beijing Forestry University inspected the site to ensure the project would not harm the park's age-old trees.

The management said that every year, the zone will be closed for at least 10 days for upgrades and maintenance, and to give the trees a break from the action.

GoApe Tree-Top Adventure Park

Where: East 7 entrance of Chaoyang Park, 1 Chaoyanggongyuan Nan Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 9 am - 9 pm

Admission: Beginner's course 180 yuan for children, 90 yuan for adults; medium course 150 for children, 180 for adults, difficult course 90 yuan

Tel: 400 699 2909

Web: kuailexingxing.cn

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyiing@ynet.com

I went to Vietnam for a couple of days and I don't know whether I should go to the police station and re-apply for a residence permit. Some friends get a new one each time they come back from abroad.

If your existing residence permit was issued in Beijing, it is not necessary to get a new one. But if you registered in a different city and are now living here, then you need to register for a new permit at the police station nearest your home.

I'm about to move to Beijing and was wondering if it's worth taking my camping gear with me. Is it a popular thing to do in the city?

Camping is not popular among locals, but it is gaining fans and there are a number of good camping spots around the town. Camping gear is sold in many shops here, so you don't need to bring your own. For more information about camping grounds and tips for camping in China, get in touch with outdoor sport clubs such as U-DO Adventure (Tel: 8477 5590, Web: udoadventure.com).

I've read books about Zen Buddhism and now want to try Zen meditation. Can you recommend a place where I can learn more about it?

China Culture Center is now offering a weekly Zen meditation class taught by Buddhist monks. Students will learn a variety of ways to meditate, including seated meditation and walking meditation. The instructor will discuss Zen meditation techniques and music, candles and incense to use to calm the mind. Call the center at 6432 1041 for the schedule and class fee.

I have a yogurt maker that I bought in Shanghai a few years ago. It's now broken and I have no idea where to buy a replacement.

We recommend the yogurt makers by Bear, which is available at Walmart, Carrefour and other big supermarkets. The brand has several types of models, which costs between 50 and 200 yuan, depending on the features. Visit bears.com.cn or call 0757 2366 3268 for more information.

I travel a lot with my children. I heard there is a travel writing competition by a company named TUI. Do you know how I can get more information about the competition?

You can check out tui.cn for more information. The deadline for submission is August 15. (Room 921-926, Tower 2, Bright China Chang'an Building, Jianguomen Nei Dajie, Dongcheng District; Tel: 8519 8999)

(By Liang Meilan)

Wangjing welcomes capital's biggest cinema

By Liang Meilan

Wangjing is now home to Beijing's biggest movie theater, the 20-hall New Film Association and Huayi Bro. Cinema, which is offering half-price tickets till late August.

"As a highly internationalized and commercialized area, Wangjing is home to a large number of foreigners and businessmen who need places to enrich the cultural aspect of their lives," said Kang Wei, CEO of Beijing Movie Company, one of the cinema's stockholders.

Besides being the city's newest and biggest cinema, New Film Association prides itself on its trilingual customer service. "To better serve foreign audiences, good communication is our top priority," Kang said. "The cinema's service team includes employees who can speak Korean or English fluently." Wangjing is dubbed Beijing's "Korea town" since 35 percent of its 300,000 residents are Koreans.

The cinema covers almost 10,000 square meters and each of its movie halls



CFP Photo

Outdoor community cinemas are not popular due to mosquitoes and hot weather in summer and frigid temperatures in winter.

averages a hundred seats. "The 20 high-definition halls are exquisitely decorated and equipped with the latest screens and speakers," Kang said. "High-end 3D film equipment have also been installed to ensure the best audio and visual effects."

One striking feature of New Hall Association is its convenient screening schedule. Once a film has ended, it is rescreened after a break of only three to five minutes,

a shorter wait than the 10 to 20 minutes in most theaters. It also has 10 ticket booths to prevent customers from waiting in long lines.

Its waiting lounge features both free computers where moviegoers can surf the Web and a play area for children.

Kang said the cinema plans to organize events like movie debuts and fans' day with actors and directors.

Cinemas in Wangjing

New Film Association and Huayi Bro. Cinema (Xingyingliang Huayixiongdi Cinema)

Where: B1, Huacai International Business Center, 16 Guangshun Bei Dajie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5762 0488

Wangjing Stellar International Cinema

Where: 4/F, Building A, Wangjing International Business Center, 9 Wangjing Jie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 5920 3788



Japanese people are known for clean clothes and modest behavior, but Sakurai Daizo can hardly be bent to that stereotype.

Covered with shaggy curls, Sakurai wears a crumpled T-shirt. His skin is tanned not in the manner of a bronze surfing god but of a farmer toiling in the harsh sun.

A few weeks ago, Sakurai worked as artistic director of the first performance by Beijing's tent theater. Inspired by his performance in town in 2007, several local theater enthusiasts created their own tent theater.

Strictly speaking, the only prerequisite for calling something tent theater is that it must be performed in a tent. But the art form deepens with the context of its creation.

Tent theater began in Japan in the 1960s during protests of the US-Japan Security Treaty Act. The form erects tents in society's unused spaces to give stage to social criticism.

Sakurai, then 18, participated in the social and political movement and saw his friends and classmates killed one after another by Japanese police.

"I felt my life was threatened, but I didn't want to run away," Sakurai says. "I thought then that I wouldn't live to be 30."

From the beginnings of this left-wing movement, Sakurai never dreamed of creating a utopia through violent revolution.

"Two of my friends – we came from our hometown Hokkaido to Tokyo together – died, not because of their rioting against the police, but because of internal conflicts among their organization," he says.

"I don't believe in utopia. We can expect to see utopia around the same time they master perceptual notion," Sakurai says.

That chaos was the birthplace of many upstart theater companies that performed in tents, on the street, in ruined homes or in cinemas after the night's final film. These groups were part of a wider protest against established social systems.

Sakurai got involved in tent theater in 1973 when he left Waseda University. "The theater became a shelter I would use to escape from police troubles," he says.

When the student movement ended at the end of the 1970s, many people involved in the movement gave up their ideals to become government clerks and businessmen. Sakurai also took a straight job.

But theater called again in 1980. It was a time of civil demonstrations carried out in Gwangju, South Korea, against the newly installed military government of Chun Doo-hwan. The Korean military killed hundreds of civilians at the demonstrations.

Japan, however, had eased into an era of consumerism.

"I'm afraid that people are going in the dangerous direction of consumerism and capitalism," he says. "In the capital cities, founded in the name of eradicating poverty, the problems only worsened."

"We are the only ones who shall save our society from these problems. That's why I've devoted so many years to producing tent theater," Sakurai says.

All the members of Sakurai's troupes are volunteers. They refuse sponsorship from both governments and enterprises to remain true to their

'I don't believe

Curtains open

By He Jianwei

Rapid urbanization is creating new ghettos at an unprecedented rate and poverty continues to haunt the Japanese playwright and director Sakurai Daizo has spent 37 years working in tent theater, and in that time

He first introduced tent theater to Taiwan in 2000. His performance in the capital seven years later led to Now the local tent theater group is ready to stage its first drama – a wrenching look at the issues the city

leftist spirits. "[Money] subverts by allowing the state or market to arrest control of our aesthetics and criticism," he says.

In 40 years Sakurai has never had a full-time job. He supports each performance through part-time work.

"When I was younger I worked on farms. But that kind of work is too difficult for me now that I'm so old," he says, beating his back.

Since the 1990s, when Sakurai was with the Ya Sen no Tsuki Haibizi troupe, he has collaborated extensively with like-minded artists throughout Asian countries from South Korea to the Philippines. He has also supported a Taiwan-based collective project under the name Haibizi for the past nine years.

Metamorphosis: City of Crust, a 2007 collaboration between Taiwan and Japan, was performed in Beijing that year as the first attempt to introduce tent theater to the mainland. The production was designed to reflect the shared developmental experiences of Asian cities.

The production took a sobering look at gentrification and ghettoization of the underclass.

The tale, taken from a Japanese folktale that tells of how desperately peasants transformed themselves into animals, plants and ogres to survive famines, is narrated through poetic outbursts from fantastical creatures.

"It is a play about ogres and monsters, about how they use their impoverished bodies and string wills to gnaw away the crust of their world from the inside," Sakurai says.

After the production, he left the group's tent in Beijing, and members of Tent-Beijing moved it to Picun Village near Capital International Airport – an area home to thousands of migrant workers. The ratio of migrant workers to native inhabitants in Picun is five to one, with nearly 10,000 migrant workers.

The tent quickly became an entertainment center for the migrant workers and their children. "It is not a tent anymore.

To my surprise, it is a permanent structure that has already changed the migrant workers' lives," Sakurai says.

The new play to debut at Picun is Tent-Beijing's first show written by Sun Bai, a drama researcher.

It tells the story of a city's underclass – people who build the city but who can only afford to live on its outskirts. The playwright creates a virtual space for those people.

"It's neither utopian nor anti-utopian," Sun says. "I call it Wuyabang, something like a group of crows living near a dump."

Sakurai has been through several rehearsals with the actors. "They are armatures. Maybe their performances are not up to professional level, but their experiment is a significant moment in the development of Chinese drama," he says.



"I'm afraid that people are going in the dangerous direction of consumerism and capitalism. In the capital cities of government founded in the name of eradicating poverty, the problems only worsened."

– Sakurai Daizo, tent-theater playwright and director

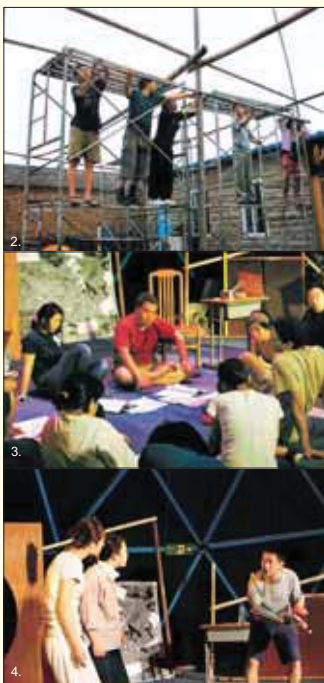
"It's neither utopian nor anti-utopian. I call it Wuyabang, something like a group of crows living near a dump."

– Sun Bai, playwright of Wuyabang

in Utopia'

on mainland's first tent theater

modern world. As unlikely as it may sound, theater is needed now more than ever. He has never let his focus falter from art's role as social critic. a grassroots offshoot: Tent-Beijing. 's migrant workers face every day.



1. The tent set up in 2007 is now a permanent entertainment center for migrant workers.
2. The members of Tent-Beijing build a tent for the new show.
3. Sakurai Daizo (middle) rehearses with the actors.
4. Wuyabang is the first show by local tent theater enthusiasts.

Photos provided by Tent-Beijing

Wuyabang²

Where: Picun Village, Jinzhan County, Chaoyang District
When: July 31 ~ August 2, 7:30 pm

Admission: Free

Getting there: Meet at Exit D of the Dongzhimen subway station at 6 pm and staff will provide free bus service; reserve seats in advance by contacting beijingzhangpeng@gmail.com or beijingzhangpeng@126.com

Oates paints the psychological terrain of fellow writers

By Charles Zhu

Joyce Carol Oates, one of the US' major contemporary writers, has published a collection of 28 reviews and reflections about writers from O'Connor to Atwood in her *In Rough Country: Essays and Reviews*.

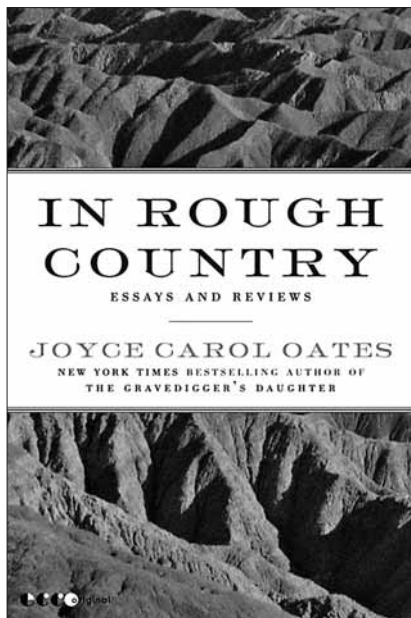
Her collection aims to describe the "treacherous geographical/psychological terrains" of her subjects. Critics have noted that her writing is exquisite, her long sentences unfold with great beauty and her lines of argument follow the natural course of thought.

The title "refers to both the treacherous geographic/psychological terrains of the writers who are my subjects. And also the emotional terrain of my life," she writes in the preface. On the list of writers that came under Oates' critical attention were Flannery O'Connor, Jim Grace, Margaret Atwood and Edgar Allan Poe.

This collection follows the death of Raymond Smith, her husband of 48 years who died suddenly in February 2008. His passing robbed Oates of any inspiration to write new novels, the medium through which she left her mark on literature. She filled her sleepless hours instead by reading and writing literary reviews.

Oates digs into Cormac McCarthy's all-male world of outlaws, sadists and savages and is fairly astonished at his lyricism and emotional range. "This monochromatic vision would be unbearable except for McCarthy's beautifully rendered 'poetic' prose. Here is an incantatory voice that makes of devastation – doom itself – something rich and strange," she writes about the novel *The Road*.

Oates praises Annie Proulx's understated precision and sparks of irony and makes comparisons between McCarthy



In Rough Country: Essays and Reviews
By Joyce Carol Oates, 416pp, Ecco, \$14.99

and her, the two Western writers, showing the brilliant talent with which they turn cruelty into lyrical beauty.

But Oates takes her greatest fancy with Sharon Olds, a writer well traveled through the rough emotional terrain of family life and erotic love. "Sharon Olds is a natural mythographer – all that falls within her scrutiny, all that she sees with her finely wrought poet-eye is myth, fairy tale, legend even as, for Olds, it is utterly domestic, ordinary."

Olds sent a letter in 2005 to then-first lady Laura Bush declining an invitation

to the National Book Festival because she was opposed to the Gulf War. The letter spoke of "anguish and shame for the current regime of blood, wounds and fire. I thought of the clean linens at your table, the shining knives and the flames of the candles, and I could not stomach it."

In Revisiting Nabokov's *Lolita*, Oates points out that far more people have an opinion about the book than have actually read it. She also says that despite its salacious subject matter, *Lolita* makes for lousy porn.

The collection offers the keen insights of a writer dedicated to literature. Oates says her natural inclination is "to wish not to publicly criticize any work of art." Even in her most scathing criticisms she still finds something positive to say. Her unfavorable review of Susanna Moore's *In the Cut*, for example, still praises the author for her "flair for witty, understated irony."

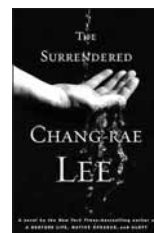
Criticism by a writer best known for novels and stories is usually peppered with clues about the critic's own work. This collection alludes to Oates' use of the claustrophobia of small towns and families, the twisted influences of class and sex and feminism. Still, she takes great care not to cast her subjects in her own narrative and focuses only on the books she discusses.

The final section of the text is devoted to "nostalgias," movingly reflecting on her childhood and her life as a writer. The essays, many of which were first published in the *New York Review of Books*, are written in a natural and easy style as fluent as she has always been.

With the writing of this collection, Oates has assumed a dual identity: that of the sorrowful widow by day and the avid reader by night.

Bookworm book listing

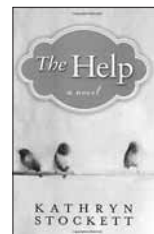
Vivian Wang from the Bookworm recommends the following bestsellers to *Beijing Today* readers.



The Surrendered

By Chang-rae Lee, 480pp, Riverhead Hardcover, \$26.95

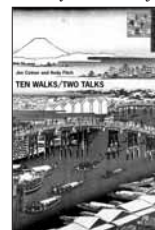
June Han was only a girl when the Korean War left her orphaned. Hector Brennan fled the tragedies of his small town as a young GI. When the war ends, their lives intersect at a Korean orphanage where they vie for the attentions of Sylvie Tanner, the beautiful yet deeply damaged missionary wife whose elusive love seems to transform everything.



The Help

By Kathryn Stockett, 464pp, Amy Einhorn Books/Putnam, \$24.95

Three ordinary women are about to take one extraordinary step. Skeeter has just returned home after graduating from the University of Mississippi. She may have a degree, but it is 1962 and her mother will not be happy till Skeeter has a ring on her finger. Aibileen is a black maid, a wise, regal woman raising her 17th white child. Minny, Aibileen's best friend, is short, fat and perhaps the sassiest woman in Mississippi. While she can cook like nobody's business, she cannot mind her tongue and has lost yet another job.



Ten Walks/Two Talks

By Jon Cotner and Andy Fitch, 88pp, Ugly Duckling Pr, \$13.58

This book combines a series of 60-minute, 60-sentence walks around Manhattan with a pair of dialogues about walking – one of which takes place during a late-night "philosophical" ramble through Central Park. Mapping 21st-century New York, Cotner and Fitch update the meandering and meditative form of Basho's travel diaries to construct a new journey.

(By He Jianwei)

Mythos novel chases secret mysteries of Buddhism

By He Jianwei

American author Dan Brown challenged Christian readers with his 2003 mystery fiction *The Da Vinci Code*. Now Yang Zhijun hopes to do the same for Buddhists with his latest novel *Fucang* (Hiding Away).

In Tibetan-Buddhism, fucang refers to the practice of hiding classical scripture when they cannot be passed on. It also refers to the spirit of Buddhism hiding in the secular world and the Buddhists who are destined to discover it.

In this book, the will of the sixth Dalai Lama Tsangyang Gyatso (1683-1706) is discovered and the lama's love poems are the password needed to decipher the mystery of his will.

Tsangyang is more a poet than a religious leader in Tibetan history. Regarded as the rebel monk, he and his affecting love poems occupy an important position in Tibetan literature.

In 1697, when Tsangyang was 15, he was confirmed as the reincarnated soul of the fifth Dalai Lama. He was officially installed as the sixth Dalai Lama through a sitting-in-bed ceremony held at Potala Palace.

That late discovery meant Tsangyang did not receive the traditional monastic training that starts during early childhood. He refused to take full monastic vows and looked with disdain on pomp, official duties and politics.

Tsangyang continued his life openly as a layperson, including cavorting in town with his lovers.

Though he died at the young age of 24, the lama left behind a collection of love poems telling of his desires, his experiences of true love and how he missed a lover.

The popular works were copied by hand and eventually by woodblock prints.

In *Fucang*, a professor at Minzu University of China is murdered by an ancient and mysterious group of assassins. A Tibetologist tracks them from Beijing to Lhasa to find answers at Potala Palace. Tsangyang's last words are the missing hint he needs to crack this criminal case.

Yang describes the book as a journey of the soul. "The soul is belief, and that belief includes love, happiness, peace, patience, mercy, kindness, altruism, temperance, loyalty and harmony," he said.



Fucang

By Yang Zhijun, 590pp, People's Literature Press, 53 yuan

Sexy and practical fashions for mid-summer

By Wang Yu

With record-setting temperatures, Beijing is now at its worst. In a season marked by intense heat and humidity, light clothing may be the only escape from intense sweating.

Whether you're trying to show off your hard work at the gym or find relief on your sweltering lunch break, this week's guest fashion editor has tips on how to balance comfort and your appearance.



Emilio Pucci 2010 AW show



Chanel lace dress

Dior lace dress

What she wears?

Animal prints

What he says?

"If my girlfriend wore animal prints I would pass out. The patterns are just too tacky. Look at the kinds of people who wear animal-print skirts on the street. That kind of cheap, trashy look is a guaranteed disaster."

— Andy Zhu, bank employee

Fashion advice

In Nina Garcia's *The One Hundred: A Guide to the Pieces Every Stylish Woman Must Own*, the fashion critic and former fashion director of *Elle* put clothes with animal prints on the list of essentials for urban ladies.

It's no surprise that the patterns draw on the wild world. They are intended to make a statement: the elegant lady is dead and here is her independent counterpart.

That may have been all the rage in the 1980s, but today most animal prints are an unmistakable sign of bad taste.

"Cheap clothes always looks cheap — especially in an animal print," says Twiggy Song, web fashion editor of Cosmopolitan's Chinese site.

These are not on which you should cheap out. "Buy products from big brands such as D&G and Dior, since their designs downplay what could become a trashy look," Song says.

And never ever wear more than one animal print unless you enjoy being laughed at.

"Keep everything else simple, elegant and sleek. You are not a lion, so don't wear a wild mane. Animal prints may bring out your wild side, but don't combine animal prints with a dangerously short skirt," Song says.

The background of the pattern should be light and gentle to make it stand out. Don't go for animal prints based on pink.

Lace

What he says?

"I think most guys see lace as sexy. In movies and fashion shows it is usually connected with European nobles of the Rococo era — at least that's the period that leaps to mind when I think of the golden age of lace. I like girls to wear lace — especially lace leggings.

But maybe it would be best to limit it to the leggings because having lace everywhere looks terrible."

— Tony Zhu, TV director

Fashion advice

"Lace has been around for years and has long been connected with femininity. Though it has often been associated with brides or lingerie, this year lace is finally becoming cool," Song says.

Though many trends in women's fashion are inspired by men's, nothing looks better than a girly, delicate lace paired with something tougher, like bright metal jewelry, leather or a blazer.

Many modern lace designs are made specifically to create a contrast between the fragile lace and utilitarian style.



Valentino lace shoe

ian style.

"Sometimes we may find that lace is too feminine to wear every day and difficult to pair with less-girly clothes. A lace-backed T-shirt or tank top can help avoid that clash," Song says.

Girls with an aversion to the outrageous can wear a lace-backed T-shirt to add punch to casual outfits. They also add a special detail to any outfit and can be trend setting. Pair a lace T-shirt with basic jeans or denim cut-offs for a sweet but surprising summer look.

"Another good choice is a pair of lace shoes. Many sandals or clogs this season have crocheted lace panels.

I'd wear a lace shoe in white to emphasize the style. You may need to be bold to make them work, but they are chic and appropriate for hot weather," Song says.

Hollow-outs

What he says?

"Judging by what I've seen at overseas music festivals, it seems like hollow-outs should be sexy. I've seen some people wear fishnets over a bikini. That's smart and creative. But I have also seen some street fashion photos of girls wearing semi-hollow-out dresses which are less revealing but very lovely. Those might also be comfortable in the summer."

— Aaron Liu, graphic designer

Fashion advice

"Like lace, hollow-outs help a girl show off her best assets. But if you are planning to wear hollow-outs to work, pair them with a T-shirt to avoid embarrassment. The T-shirt should better a darker color like blue, deep red or gray to emphasize the style," Song says.

A 50 percent hollow-out is more practical, especially on the shoulder or the skirt.

"Something less hollow will be safer in the office. Lighter colored hollow-outs are better because it's summer. A T-shirt with a hollow-out back is easy to wear and comfortable. Paired with lace, you can get a half-sexy, half-lovely look. Japanese fashion experts are masters of this look," Song says.



Dior animal print dress



Gucci jacket

What he wears?

What she says?

"I work in the CBD and there are some guys who still have to wear suits at work. My boyfriend is one of them. In the building it's cool but you have to go out for lunch every day and it is hard to bear the weather. I think if the guys have to wear suits, they should choose the right material."

— Charlotte Zhang, office worker

Fashion advice

Cotton and other natural-fiber men's suits deserve a place in every summer collection. Even high-fashion masters have added cotton suits to their collections.

"It is easy to fall in love with cotton men's suits. They are cool substitutes to summer-weight wools. They can be worn with a vintage print T-shirt or a collared shirt. For a casual, urban look, add a pair of nice shoes. Modern cotton suits are much better made than their vintage predecessors," Song says.

Still, there are also some pitfalls to avoid.

Tropical weight cloth of 7- to 8-ounce fabric leads to wrinkling. This kind of cloth has limited durability and feels warmer since it lacks a loose weave.

A cotton suit with full lining offers equally little comfort because it does not allow air to circulate.



Modern and classic furniture from local designers



Aerostream

Price: Available in September

Material: Fiber glass, stainless steel, LED

By Annie Wei

Fake antique furniture from Gaobeidian may look fine in most homes, but it isn't the preferred choice of selective customers. With demand for classy, authentic pieces on the rise, more local designers are turning to modern designs and applying their vision to making functional, aesthetic pieces for homes and offices.

Original designer furniture is more popular now than ever, said Liu Feng, chief designer of Pai Design Corporation. However, to have quality products, designers have to slow down and spend more time studying workmanship, materials and market demand. "You should have creativity to touch people, know how to save cost and sell pieces at a reasonable price," Liu said. "Only then will consumers be able to enjoy your work."

Meanwhile, a group of distributors are doing their part to support the original furniture market. Consumers can find products at chain stores like Qumei (qumei.com), Roche-Boboiss (inside Juran furniture store, 65, Beisihuan Dong Lu, tel: 8463 9988), Opal Furniture (opal-furniture.com) and ACF Furniture and Design (acfrepublic.com).

Last month, 14 local designers gathered in Beijing to prepare for the Tendence Frankfurt exhibition in Germany on August 27-31. Although most of their pieces won't hit the market until after the exhibition ends, *Beijing Today* got a sneak peek.



Flower cafe table

Designer: Wang Xin

Price: 5,060 yuan

Material: Stainless steel



UFO coffee table

Designer: Jia Li

Price: To be determined

Biao cabinet

Designer: Li Daqi

Price: 12,000 yuan

Material: Stainless steel, veneer wood



Sunflower lamp

Designer: Xu Zepeng

Price: To be determined in late September

Material: Fiber glass, veneer



Crystal

Price: Available in late August

Material: Acrylic, Swarovski crystal, wood

ACF Furniture and Design

Where: acf, Do7, 798 Art District, 4 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am - 7 pm, Tuesday to Sunday

Tel: 5978 9945

Photos provided by ACF



One-of-a-kind Indonesian boutique in Lido

By Annie Wei

In the prosperous neighborhood of Lido a unique luxury boutique, opened four months ago, has been steadily making inroads.

Variety Boutique, owned and operated by Senny Liem, a Chinese Indonesian who has lived in China for 15 years, is the first boutique in the country to sell high-end, luxury Indonesian clothes.

With fabric imported from Europe, Variety sells tailor-made, haute couture clothes in its Indonesia store and has another store in Holland that sells high-end jewelry. When Liem consolidated the stores under her name, she also started Variety Boutique in Beijing.

Indonesian fashion is known for its complicated embroidery with lots of sequins, which give an image of luxury and glamour. Anyone interested can ask for such a tailor-made piece and the store will arrange the order with designers in Indonesia. It would take about three months for one dress.

The boutique sells batik (100-500 yuan), which is cloth that's dyed using a centuries-old Indonesian technique. It also carries baroque jewelry (5,000 to 20,000 yuan) made of Swarovski crystals from Austria. Fashionable casual clothes (400-900 yuan) imported from Hong Kong and South Korea, as well as handbags and accessories, are also available.

"A woman usually has two choices - be happy or be beautiful," Liem said. "But I choose both of them." That, according to Liem, is the inspiration behind Variety.

Variety Boutique

Where: 6 Fangyuan Xi Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 10 am - 9 pm

Tel: 6437 8645



1. Casual dress for the beach, 300-400 yuan
2. Casual dress, 889 yuan
3. 4. Baroque jewels, 5,000-20,000 yuan
5. Cocktail dress, 1,960 yuan
6. Cocktail dress, 4,368 yuan

Photos provided by Variety Boutique

Quality comes in small, delicious packages

New Old Beijing shaobing

By Annie Wei

Luxury doesn't just mean fancy; quality is important as well. *Beijing Today* found two eateries that put their hearts and souls in making the best of simple foods: a cup of coffee or a simple *shaobing* – a baked, layered flatbread sometimes with sesame on top.

Finding the devil in the details is what distinguishes the following two places from most others in the city. Everything – from ingredients to preparation – is scrutinized, resulting in a product that can accurately be called luxurious.

Fisheye Café aims to provide best coffee in town



Ben Kaminsky (right), quality control director from Ritual Coffee Roasters in the US, works with Fisheye Café's staff before its opening. Photos by Qian Bingge

Fish Sun, a Chinese entrepreneur, likes drinking coffee, so much so that he recently took a six-month trip to San Francisco and Seattle – hubs of coffee culture in the US – to find the best. But the trip wasn't just for self-indulgence – he wanted to find the best beans to bring home for Fisheye Café, his blue and white, 70-square-meter coffee shop scheduled to open in August in Sanlitun Village.

In San Francisco, Sun met Eileen Hassi, the owner of Ritual Coffee Roasters. During that time, Sun was drinking a dozen cups a day – and enjoying it to the last drop – but it was Hassi's coffee that impressed him the most.

While independent cafes are growing popular in the US, Ritual Coffee Roasters stands out because of its roasting techniques, its quality beans and unique philosophy on the coffee-making process. Ben Kaminsky, quality control director, said the company works selectively with coffee producers that focus on quality over quantity and uses seasonal coffee beans that are sourced from eight countries in Central America and Africa, including El Salvador, Kenya, Costa Rica and Colombia. Hassi usually spends at least four months a year in these countries looking for good coffee



Shiny new Fisheye Café

bean producers.

It's Ritual Coffee's policy to not use beans that have been in storage for more than six months. In addition, Ritual Coffee has its own roasting factory, as management believes coffee should mimic the freshness of fruits, considering coffee is in its own way a special kind of fruit.

Hassi, who has been in the coffee business for 10 years, opened her first Ritual Coffee Roasters five years ago. Now she owns two stores in San Francisco and one in Napa, California, with another 25 shops using their trademarked coffee in their stores.

But Hassi doesn't sell her coffee to just any shop. "Sometimes I get a call saying,

"We have our shop decorated, kitchen ready and staff hired, we need a coffee supplier," Hassi said. "No, that's not the way we work."

Sun convinced Hassi to supply his store with beans, which are delivered straight from San Francisco every week. "We only keep each bag for 10 days to two weeks, to keep its freshness," said Eric Xie, the store manager. Hassi and Kaminsky have also been flown into Beijing to train Fisheye's staff.

As of press time, Fisheye has yet to set its retail prices, but consumers shouldn't expect anything cheap – the milk that's used is already three times the price of milk at other cafes. In the US, Ritual Coffee Roasters' coffee is slightly more expensive, with espressos at \$2.75 (19 yuan), \$3.25 (22 yuan) for a cappuccino, \$3.50 (24 yuan) for a latte and \$20 to \$30 (136-204 yuan) for a pound of beans. The original Ritual Coffee Roasters in San Francisco sells 700 to 900 cups a day, "which is a lot for an independent coffee shop," Hassi said.

Fisheye Café

Where: First floor, S1, The Sanlitun Village, 19 Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District
Open: 10 am – 10 pm since August
Tel: Not yet available

Old Beijing shaobing

On a two-square-meter booth across from Tiankelong supermarket, on a yellow paper sign, is written "Old Beijing shaobing." And every time around breakfast and dinner, this hole-in-the-wall, which has been open for a year, sees a long line of people waiting patiently.

Selling at 0.6 yuan each, these baked flatbreads may be the best value in town. They are slightly crispy on the outside and soft and hearty on the inside. The salt-and-pepper shaobing sells the best. Others, like one with black sesame paste filling, are also popular.

The window-front store also sells seven or eight other types of traditional northern China pastries, priced at 0.6 to 1 yuan each.

Customers are mostly those who work or live in the neighborhood, and they usually buy a dozen at a time. When microwaved, halved and filled with vegetables or meat, these shaobing are like the Chinese version of American sliders.

During the winter, shaobing work well with hotpot. During the summer, they are a great after-hours treat, especially when paired with lamb kabobs and cold beer.

The saleswoman at the booth said they have more than 10 workers who prepare flatbreads all day, and that they sell 1,000 to 2,000 each day.

When asked about the secret of making quality shaobing, she demurred. "I'm not going to tell you," she said.

Lao Beijing Shaobing

Where: Across the street from Beijing Youth Daily's red road sign, 23 Baijiangzhuang (Yaojiayuan Lu), Chaoyang District
Open: 6:30 am – 8 pm



Shaobing, 0.6 yuan each

CFP Photo

中国主流人文周刊

长柄雨伞

8月缤纷好礼 BO精彩送不停

8月5日、8月19日、8月26日：在本报刊例赠阅读者杂志

赠送超值礼品一份

指甲钳

环保餐具

化妆品

一刊三册 每周四全国发行

醒世郎

BO

BO

BO

A decade of emotions in song



By He Jianwei

Taiwanese singer Wan Fang last month released *Let's Not Grieve Anymore* – an album that came almost a decade after her last one.

Next month, Wan will go on a five-city mainland tour to promote the album, and Beijing will be her last but one.

Unlike most pop stars who sing about falling in love and breaking up, Wan's music has always revolved around life, death and female empowerment.

In *Let's Not Grieve Anymore*, Wan co-wrote five tracks that tell of her ups and downs in the past eight years. "I wrote the sentences 'I see happiness smiling at me' and 'we are not always that brave' a few years back," she says. "Then I expanded the sentences into song lyrics and made this album."

In the title track "Let's Not Grieve Anymore," she sings about learning to accept death as a fact of life. "At my age, I have

attended a lot of funerals – some of my father's generation, some of my friends. We, the living, must learn how to live without them," says Wan, who turned 42 this month.

Last year, the singer made a will to donate her body to medical research after her death. "It's we who determine the value of our life," she says, explaining her decision.

In "Seeing Happiness Smiling at Me," Wan talks about dealing with depression, a song inspired by the experiences of many close friends. "When you are clinically depressed, you are helpless, although you want to be happy," she says.

Wan makes peace with her own vulnerability in "Not Always That Brave," while in "Solitude," the album's only love song, she speaks of putting a 10-year-long relationship behind her and embracing the tranquility of solitude.

Let's Not Grieve Anymore Concert Tour

Where: The One Club, Building 5, 718 Art and Culture Zone, 19 Ganluyuan, Gaobeidian Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: August 12, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180 yuan, 280 yuan for VIP

Tel: 400 898 8383, 400 610 3721

Upcoming

Nightlife

CocoRosie 2010 China Tour

This sister act of Bianca Coco and Sierra Rosie Casady blends pop, blues, opera, electronica and hip hop.

Where: Yugongyishan, 3-2 Zhang-zizhong Lu, Dongcheng District

When: August 5, 9 pm

Admission: 180 yuan advance purchase, 230 yuan at the door

Tel: 6404 2711

Stage in August

Concert

Myung-Whun Chung and the Asia Philharmonic Orchestra

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts (NCPA), 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 6, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-880 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

The Voice of Angel – Philadelphia Boys' Choir and Chorale

Where: Forbidden City Concert Hall (inside Zhongshan Park), 18 Zhaodengyu Lu, Xicheng District

When: August 11, 7:30 pm

Admission: 10-100 yuan

Tel: 6417 7845

Cyprien Katsaris Piano Recital

Where: Concert Hall of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 21, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-380 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

White Bear – Wu Na with 'Beijing Express' from Belgium

Where: 46 Theater, 46 Fangjia Hutong, Dongcheng District

When: August 27, 7:30 pm

Admission: 50-80 yuan

Tel: 6417 0058

Drama

I Don't Want to Sing Alone

Where: Oriental Pioneer Theater, 8-2 Dongdan Santiao Wangfujing, Dongcheng District

When: August 10-22, 7:30 pm

Admission: 100-380 yuan, 50 yuan for students

Tel: 6275 8452

I Love Peach Blossoms

Where: Multi-Purpose Theater of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 12-15, 7:30 pm

Admission: 180-320 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

The Master Builder

Where: Peking University Hall, 5 Yiheyuan Lu, Haidian District

When: August 19-20, 7:30 pm

Admission: 80-200 yuan

Tel: 6275 8452

Opera

Thunderstorm

Where: Opera House of the National Center for the Performing Arts, 2 Xi Chang'an Jie, Xicheng District

When: August 28-29, 7:30 pm

Admission: 120-480 yuan

Tel: 6655 0000

(By He Jianwei)

5 Friday, July 30

Movie

The Conformist (1970)

The story opens in 1938 Rome, where Marcello has just taken a job with the dictator Benito Mussolini. At the same time, he is courting a beautiful young woman who will make him even more of a conformist.

Where: Italian Cultural Institute, 2 Dong Er Jie, Sanlitun Lu, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6532 2187

Exhibition



Angles of Life

Four artists reflect on different aspects of life. Huang Zhiqiong scrutinizes people's vanity and desires, Guo Kaijun examines the life of migrant workers, Zhang Youngsheng observes children's carefree existence and Zhang Xiaolong shows human beings' power over nature.

Where: Soemo Fine Arts, 66 Xiaopu Nan Jie, Songzhuang, Tongzhou District

When: Until August 18, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8957 9113

Nightlife

Psychropic

This technical death metal band from Australia has four albums out, the latest of which is 2008's *Ob(servant)*.

Where: Mao Livehouse, 111 Gulou Dong Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8 pm

Admission: 80 yuan advance purchase, 120 yuan at the door

Tel: 6586 0065 ext. 8213

6 Saturday, July 31

Exhibition

A Stolen World – Du Kun Solo Exhibition

In Du's view, human beings have taken too much from nature yet are never grateful or satisfied.

Where: Mizuma and One Gallery, 241 Caochangdi Village, Cuigezhuang, Chaoyang District

When: Until August 29, daily except Monday, 11 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 5127 3268

Movie



In Bruges (2008)

Irish hit men Ken and Ray are sent by mobster Harry Waters to the medieval Belgian city of Bruges on Christmas Day after a job gone awry in a London church. Ray meets small-time drug dealer Chloe, who sells to the cast and crew of a film being shot locally, and later gets into trouble with her boyfriend.

Where: Lady Book Salon, 2/F New World Shopping Mall, 7 Dong Damochang Jie, Xicheng District

When: 7 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 6708 7470

Nightlife

Mirage Live

This experimental metal fusion band performs rootsy folk in addition to angry metal.

Where: Jianghu Bar, 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiaodaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 9:30 pm

Admission: 30 yuan

Tel: 6401 4611

7 Sunday, August 1

Exhibition

Sanlunche Featuring the Terraplastic Army – Rainer Prohaska

Solo Exhibition

The show presents modified versions of Beijing's *sanlunche*, or three-wheeled motor vehicles, including their construction design.

Where: Anni Art Gallery, 798 Art District, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Until August 22, daily except Monday, 10 am – 6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8456 7783

Nightlife

Dekoor Close Harmony

This versatile student choir from The Netherlands' Utrecht University performs jazz, pop, gospel, Latin and classical pieces.

Where: Star Live, 3/F Tango, 79 Heping Xi Jie, Dongcheng District

When: 8:30 pm

Admission: 120 yuan advance purchase, 160 yuan at the door, 260 and 300 yuan for VIP

Tel: 6402 5080

Movie

Naked Lunch (1991)

Like his wife, bug exterminator Bill Lee finds himself addicted to the bug powder he uses. After accidentally killing her, he descends into a hallucinatory existence in which he becomes a secret agent hired by a series of bizarre creatures. To break his addiction, Bill channels his energy into writing "reports" on his delusional missions.

Where: China Film Archive, 3 Wenhuiyuan Lu, Xiaoxitian, Haidian District

When: 4 pm

Admission: 25 yuan

Tel: 8229 6153



Order your chaos with Zen meditation

By Li Zhixin

Life should be about living — not about putting on a show for the world. But in the big city, many people don't know what they are looking for and prefer to follow the pack rather than listen to their own needs.

One old saying goes that tension is who you think you should be while relaxation is who you are. It's a profound statement on which to meditate, and the one many office workers are thinking about as they pursue Zen to bring balance to their otherwise chaotic lives.

Fashionable way to relax

Xing Xiaoping, 35, an economic journalist, saw a post on Douban.com calling all Zen enthusiasts for a trip to experience temple life downtown. She signed up and took a two-day trip to Chaoyang Temple where she found many like-minded young people seeking spiritual release.

As a journalist, Xing has a high-pressure career. She has to seek out story ideas and interview people every day. While successful in the eyes of her parents and friends, her personal life has been in shambles since economic troubles brought her three-year marriage to an end.

The negative emotions resulting from that failure destroyed her confidence and left her depressed and disinterested in former hobbies like swimming and mountain climbing.

Zen helped her to reexamine her life.

By listening to sutra interpretations, drinking tea, meditating and cleaning the temple, she came to realize no person or achievement or event would make her happy. Without the distractions of television, the Internet and mobile phones, she set about cultivating her own happiness.

"First you tell yourself to become happy, and then you go out into the world and do what you need to do," she said. "The highs we get from our senses and material possessions are fleeting and leave us needing another fix. You can find more happiness sitting alone in a temple or your apartment than running around. Be secure in your life before making decisions about what you want and where you want to be."

Liu Xin, 27, a salesman, similarly complained about his life after graduation. "I'd turned 30 and my life was nothing like I had hoped. I didn't have a girlfriend, an apartment or the job I wanted," he said.

But since he turned to Zen he has noticed a change in his mindset.

"My brain used to run the same script every morning — a laundry list of everything I didn't have in life. Now I realize that what we focus on is what we get. The more I thought about not having love or a dream job, the more stuck I became. When I started waking up with gratitude for everything I did have in my life, my world grew," he said.

Yang Jun, 29, a public servant notorious for his short temper, has also found some degree of self-control. Yang previously could not sit still for more than 2 minutes, but a trip to the Pudu Temple in Liuxinzhuan village changed his ways.

"I meditated every morning for about an hour before practicing yoga. I learned that stillness is what connects you to your true self. It's your spirit that has all the answers you need and lets you see things clearly. Meditation is the best way to relax. It calms and centers me, and draws out my best parts," he said.

While some modern stressors may be good for promoting motivation, most only unbalance people's bodies and minds, sometimes causing anxiety and depression.

"People in big cities are expert multitaskers since it seems like the only way to get ahead. It is no shock their stress levels are so high since they never take a moment to completely relax," said Yao Xinshi, a member of the Buddhism Research and Development Committee of Chaoyang Temple.

Yao said that even with a heavy mortgage, complicated office politics, utilitarian human relations and fragile affections, it is possible to live a happy life in the city if you are willing to change your habits and outlook.

"It is very important to watch what you tell yourself. Every thought and word you say has power. What we see and what we believe is exactly what we get in life. Positive thinking and affirmation is the best trick," he said.



CFP Photo

Tips for urban Zen

1. Breathe deep: Life is measured in units of breath. Breathing easily can help your body and mind relax. Under stressful situations people often forget to breathe evenly and rhythmically and end up compounding anxieties. Calm, rhythmic breathing can be developed through meditation.

2. Meditate daily: A 15- to 30-minute meditation break can help one to disconnect from the world. Leave titles and identity behind and be an ordinary human being. The feeling of plainness is spiritual and a moment like this can refresh energy and calm the mind.

3. Let go of ego: While some stress comes from work, more comes from thinking about work. Picture oneself as a nobody and put aside titles. Try not to compare and compete, and instead appreciate the natural outcome. The mind seems hardwired to anticipate the future through negative what-ifs, and this thinking breeds stress.

4. Focus on the now: Zen teaches one to live in the present because doing so can reduce stress dramatically. Even if five customers are calling at once or several assignments are due next week, these jobs cannot be multitasked without each taking a blow to quality. Finish the current task before giving the next your full attention. Don't let the fear of how much work awaits become overwhelming.

5. Develop your innate wisdom: Meditation helps one to find inner peace from within. The inner self has incomparable wisdom which people often ignore. Meditation helps to elevate a person from the conscious level (mind) to the wisdom level (heart) so they can be stable and objective when facing challenges. Subjective views create stress while objective ones dispel it.

Where to learn as a novice

Badachu

Location: South foothill of Xishan scenic spot, Shijingshan District
Tel: 8483 4200

Chaoyang Temple

Location: Huanrou Bei Dajie, Ganjian Hill, Huairou District
Tel: 8960 1021

Longquan Temple

Location: Fenghuangling mountain area, Haidian District
Tel: 6248 9976

Pudu Temple

Location: Liuxinzhuan village, Zhangjiawan town, Tongzhou District
Tel: 8323 4882

Shengquan Temple

Location: Koutou village, Qiaozhi town, Huairou District
Tel: 6063 7123

Cooling down high up in Baihua Mountain

By Zhang Dongya

Beaches are crowded nowadays with people who want to escape the tortuous heat, but mountains remain a good choice for those seeking a bit of cool. Baihua Mountain, where the temperature dips to 10 C at night, is worth a visit.

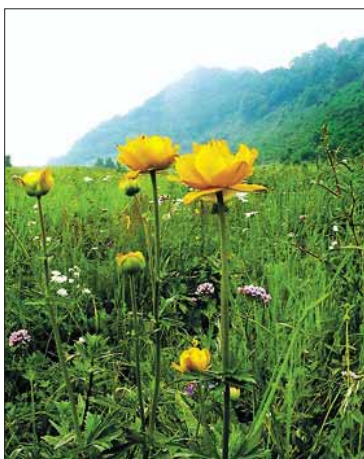
Now is the best time to view the mountain's flowers. As its name – "Hundred Flower Mountain" – suggests, the sight of the summer bloom can be quite a treat for tourists and nature-lovers.

Pitch a tent in the mountain to free yourself from the daily grind of office life, catch a break from the hottest time of the year and witness a brilliant sunrise at dawn.



Baihua Mountain is host to 170 species of rare animals and insects.

Photos by Tatsuya



Tropaecolum can only be found at an elevation of 1,800 to 2,000 meters.



The best time to visit Baihua Mountain is now, for its summer bloom and cool surroundings.

Photo by Cecilia Guan



Echinops is shaped like an animal's head.

A flowery mountain

Baihua Mountain is located in Mentougou District: Beijing's western suburb. To develop tourism, the local government built a road to the top of the mountain. Driving along this zigzag route, some experienced travelers say they are reminded of the rugged Sichuan-Tibet highway, where the road turns 72 times during one section.

The road up Baihua is equally narrow with many switchbacks – a miniature 72 turns.

With the highest peak at 1,991 meters, Baihua is the third tallest mountain in Beijing. At the top is the largest quantity of blossomed and blossoming flowers, which carpets the broad meadow with a panoply of color.

The flower distribution is unique due to the wide temperature gradient. At the foot of the mountain, one may see flowers wilting under the heat; mid-slope, flowers have bloomed fully; while at the top, flowers are still in their buds.

In March, peach blossoms greet the spring. As the season changes, so does the land: apricots, azaleas, wild peonies, China roses and jessamine all begin to bloom, turning the mountain into a sea of flowers.

Now is the right time to check out the large swatches of lilacs. The mountain's most fantastic flower is the *tropaecolum*, which can only be found at an elevation of 1,800 to 2,000 meters. It is a rare species of flower in northern China, but on Baihua it is in abundant supply.

Another gem is the edelweiss, which are small white flowers that dot big grasslands. Other exotic flowers include the *phlomis*, which resembles a candelabrum, and the *echinops*, which is shaped like an animal's head.

The flowers draw photographers, who catalogue their pictures on the Internet every summer. Herbalists are also attracted to the site because the mountain is host to more than 200 types of herbal medicines, like *acanthopanax* and *ginseng*.

More than 170 species of rare animals call Baihua home, including black storks, golden eagles and brown-eared pheasants. Bird watchers can head to the mountain during the spring and autumn, when more than 300 kinds of birds gather there.

Continued on page 21...



... continued from page 20

Temple at the peak

At Baihua Mountain's peak is Xianguang Temple (Buddha Show Temple), Beijing's highest temple. When viewed from the hillside it is shrouded in clouds and mist, adding a tinge of mystery to the sacred place.

Legend has it that it was built during the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and called Foyan Temple (Buddha Rock Temple) during the Liao Dynasty (907-1125). It gained its present name later.

During the War of Resistance against Japan, China used the temple as an information relay station. The Buddhist statues and bronze bells were used to make bullets. The temple was destroyed by Japanese gunfire in 1944 and restored – for the 38th time, according to records – during later decades.

During its heyday, the temple housed more than 200 monks, though the last monk left the temple for secular life in 1946. Monks moved back in after it was rebuilt, though only a small handful of monks still live there.

At the front of the temple is a pavilion with a big bell inside. This bell pavilion was constructed by the mountain's Lianhua'an (Lotus Nunnery) Village in 2005. Standing here, you get a bird's eye view of the surrounding peaks and valleys.

Hiking and camping

When the sun goes down at about 8 pm, the temperature dips dramatically and the wind can make it positively cold. Mountaineers are advised to bring sweaters and jackets.

The mountain also gets quite dark, making it an ideal place for the moon and stargazing. And in the early morning, you can view the sun rising out of the clouds. A temperature increase soon follows.

Summer is the best time to hike to the peak. Trekking along the ridge, you will encounter several villagers with baskets on their backs who make repeated trips to the peak to pick mushrooms. Encountering one of these locals provides a good opportunity to learn more about the mountain. They will be pleased to tell you more about the native plants and animals, and teach you how to avoid poisonous snakes by wearing certain colors.

Along the way, you will see thousands of holes, built by ant colonies. Adjacent to one another, they look like villages.

It is said that there is a big block of ice on the mountain that stays intact all year, with a waterfall coming out from it. The best place to view this waterfall is on a rock stretched out over a cliff. The water falls into a deep pool, generating a pleasant, stirring roar.

The road up Baihua Mountain is narrow and full of switchbacks.

CFP Photo

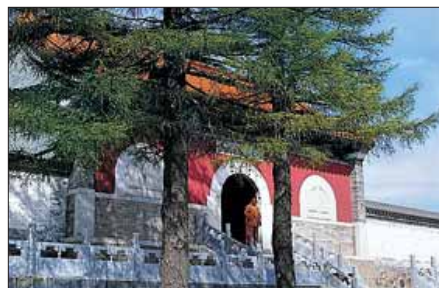


The densely covered mountain is very cool even during summertime.

Photo by Cecilia Guan



The bell pavilion in front of Xianguang Temple is a good place to get a bird's eye view of the surrounding peaks.



Xianguang Temple, the highest temple in Beijing, houses a small handful of monks.

Photos by Shanchuanxing

Travel information

Getting to Baihua Mountain: Take Subway Line 1 to Pingguoyuan Station and take 929zhi (929 branch line). It takes about three hours. For group travelers, you can rent a car in Pingguoyuan, which costs about 300 yuan for a round trip.

Admission: 60 yuan

Dining



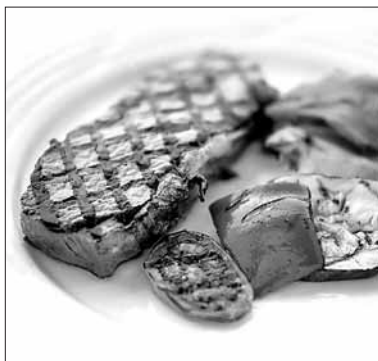
Mid-Autumn Festival

To celebrate Mid-Autumn Festival, the Regent Beijing has crafted a variety of mooncake delights with traditional fillings. These mooncakes are specially packaged and designed as the perfect gift. Choose from many delicious cakes to create a package for family and business associates this joyful season.

Where: The Regent Beijing, 99 Jinbao Jie, Dongcheng District

Cost: 198 yuan (Classic Moon Cake box), 298 yuan (Sumptuous Moon Cake box), 398 yuan (Luxurious Moon Cake box)

Tel: 8522 1789



Come for steak 'n' beer

Craving a good Australian steak? Don't miss the Steak 'n' Beer Feast at One East. Enjoy an American-sized T-bone, a mouthwatering tenderloin or a rib-eye boneless steak marinated 28 days. All are freshly delivered from Australia and grilled to perfection by One East chefs! There are many options for sauces and salads. Come in and enjoy unlimited ice-cold beer and the best steaks Beijing has to offer.

Where: One East, Hilton Beijing, 1 Dongfang Lu, Dong Sanhuan Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

When: July 1 — August 31

Tel: 5865 5030

Endless dim sum brunch

Dim sum is a Chinese style of dining that presents the eater with a dizzying array of small, bite-sized, light dishes served with tea. The Guangdong custom is to eat dim sum after morning exercise over the newspaper. For many people, the event is treated as a weekend family affair. Doubletree is offering 30 different kinds of dim sum for 88 yuan. Included is a cold appetizer buffet, congee, dessert and tea.

Where: Doubletree by Hilton Beijing, 168 Guanganmen Wai Dajie, Xicheng District

When: Saturday, Sunday and public holidays, 10:30 am — 2:30 pm

Tel: 6338 1999 ext. 1726

Taste of Chynna

Experience a new take on Cantonese and Beijing cuisine at the theater of Chynna restaurant in the Hilton Beijing Wangfujing. A troupe of master chefs led by Executive Chef Yan Zheng will showcase their culinary skills in signature dishes such as Cantonese roasted, crispy chicken, seafood dumpling soup, steamed mandarin fish with five vegetables and clay-pot rice with pork sausage and cured meat. Several private dining rooms are available for guests seeking an intimate or formal setting.

Where: Hilton Beijing Wangfujing, 8 Wangfujing Dong Jie, Dongcheng District

Tel: 5812 8888 ext. 8411



North African food festival

Couscous, tajine and baba ganoush and regional beverages like Moroccan tea are all here. Come immerse yourself in the culture of northern Africa and discover a unique culinary tradition.

Where: VIC, Sofitel Wanda Beijing, 93 Jianguo Road, Chaoyang District

When: August 17–25

Cost: 208 yuan (lunch buffet), 278 yuan (dinner buffet) (15 percent surcharge)

Tel: 8599 6666 ext. 6521

Hotel



China World Hotel 2010 wedding festival

For this passionate wedding season, China World Hotel Beijing has created a new one-stop-shop to help couples plan their wedding day without having to sweat the details. A wedding specialist and wedding butler will coordinate the special occasion from beginning to end. Weddings are customized from one of four basic packages.

Where: China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 6408

Shangri-La releases Charity Mooncake Collection

Hotels operated by Shangri-La Group in Beijing are participating in Embrace: Beijing Charity Mooncake Collection 2010, an event to raise funds for local underprivileged communities. Boxes of four mooncakes — two white lotus paste and two red lotus paste cakes each with an egg yolk — will be sold for 138 yuan, of which 50 yuan will be donated to beneficiaries like the Dandelion and Hua Ao Shijinshan schools for children of low-income migrant families. The boxes are available at China World Hotel, Shangri-La Hotel, Kerry Centre Hotel, Traders Hotel and Traders Upper East Hotel.

Event

Chinese summer camp

Kids between the ages of 8-18 are invited to join a five-day sleepover at Beijing Sailing Center with or without their parents. Beginner, intermediate and advanced sailing courses will be taught by Chinese-speaking instructors. The focus of each class is fun on the water. The package costs 4,900 yuan per student and includes transportation, lodging, grilled food and sailing lessons. Contact Beijing Sailing at 1500 118 9580 or sailing@beijingsailing.com for more information.

Brand

Transformation of the Qipao

The exhibition Evergreen Classic: Transformation of the Qipao will be open at The Hong Kong Museum of History from June 23 until September 13. It is the world's first, most comprehensive collection of qipao ever displayed. Blanc de Chine was the first Chinese luxury brand that made a serious effort to transform traditional Chinese culture into a modern lifestyle, and it has successfully brought Chinese designs into the world of haute couture. The brand is distinguished by its ability to design outside the boundaries of fixed notions and its pursuit of excellence and quality. For more information, visit blanchedechine.com.



Tourism

Singapore Airlines adds flights for winter

Singapore Airlines is changing its schedule this winter to include more flights on selected routes. The airline will be adding daily flights to the US and Russia via its Singapore-Los Angeles and Singapore-Moscow-Houston routes. Also going daily will be the Singapore-Munich-Manchester and Singapore-Seoul flights. Additional services will be added for some destinations in Japan. There will be three more departures for the Singapore-Osaka flight each week, in addition to current daily departures.

(By Sun Feng)

Chinese and Western charms around Ritan Park

By Jackie Zhang

Many Beijingers would say Silk Street, which gained fame in the 1980s, is the most popular place for foreigners in the city. As a former embassy district by the charming Ritan Park, the area has developed into a bustling commercial area for food, shopping and entertainment.

Several different kinds of restaurants can be found in the Ritan area for both Chinese and international cuisine. Coffeeshops, cafes and Russian restaurants – mostly located on the well-known Yabao Lu – are all around. And for a really special treat, check out places like Peace Art and Co, which offer a tranquil atmosphere for enjoying traditional Chinese calligraphy and painting.

Experience authentic New Orleans gourmet year-round at NOLA

By Liang Meilan

"New Orleans" chicken wings may be on the menu at KFC, but real Cajun food is hard to come by in the city. NOLA Café, which opened last September, hopes to change that.

NOLA, which stands for New Orleans Louisiana, is a two-story restaurant on the East corner of Xiushui Nan Jie, where foreign restaurants conglomerate. "The exuberant vegetation near Ritan Park drew us here," said Zhou Yuan, NOLA manager. "We hope our guests can enjoy the greenery while dining in."

NOLA adheres to green and healthy concepts. That's why there is a pair of Chinese Toon trees, which appear in the company's logo, in front of the restaurant. "Many guests like to sit on the rooftop, where the leaves of a 25-year-old Alexandrian laurel tree," Zhou said.

In the front yard is a mint garden that serves two purposes: it attracts guests with its fresh smell and is used in many of NOLA's foods and drinks.

The head chef is Brendon Trowbridge,

who was born and raised in New Orleans, where he learned traditional Cajun cooking. He came to Beijing in 2008 and began working at Hilton Beijing. "When we found Brendon and told him our idea to open the first New Orleans restaurant in town, he was more than happy to join us," Zhou said.

To ensure the authenticity of its dishes, NOLA never uses canned and semi-prepared food. Bacon, smoked salmon and spicy smoked sausages are hand-made by Trowbridge. "We never buy breads from the bakery because we have a special oven for making bagels and other breads for hamburgers in true American style," Zhou said.

New Orleans food is very different from most US regional cuisines because there is a unique blend of flavors. Its food developed a unique and easily recognizable Cajun flavor, which is spicier than what you'd find in the northern part of the continent. This is reflected in the chicken and andouille jambalaya (47/70 yuan), NOLA's most-ordered specialty.



Photos provided by NOLA

Guests who know real New Orleans food may be excited to find po-boy – the New Orleans sandwich – on NOLA's menu. "It is a traditional submarine sandwich from Louisiana that almost always consists of meat or seafood, usually fried, served on baguette-like Louisiana French bread," Zhou said. "Catfish po-boy is the most popular dish at NOLA."

NOLA changes its menu seasonally. If guests are lucky, they can enjoy a traditional specialty served only several times in August and September: a large dish of boiled cray with 12 natural seasonings (80 yuan).

With ample space and rooftop seating, NOLA is a hot place for small-scale wedding receptions and gatherings. For a party of 20 to 30 people, reservation should be made two weeks in advance. A reasonably priced lunch special at 55 yuan is beloved by businessmen and office workers around Jianguomenwai.

NOLA

Where: Jia 11, Xiushui Nanjie, Jianguomenwai, Chaoyang District

Open: 9 am – 10 pm

Tel: 8563 6215



Photos provided by Heping Gallery

Double delight: antique mansion serves as restaurant and art gallery

By Liang Meilan

Near the south gate of Ritan Park is a stately old mansion adorned with red lanterns and painted with doves and the characters for "peaceful" (heping). Many passersby guess this place is a tea club – but there's much more than meets the eye.

While Heping Gallery does serve tea, it's also a place to see classic paintings amid the soft tunes of traditional Chinese music. Those who enter find it easy to wile away half a day in utter tranquility.

Gallery owner Xu Huaichi, son of the well-known tiger painter Xu Linlu, is a prestigious figure among Chinese watercolorists. Half a century ago, Xu Linlu started an art shop called Heping, which was reclaimed by the government during the Cultural Revolution. To carry on his father's cause, Xu Huaichi opened his gallery, a two-story building where the top floor is a restaurant and the bottom is a miniature art museum.

The walls, roof and furniture are decorated by reproductions of authentic paintings by famous Chinese artists such as Qi Baishi, Li Keran and Huang Yongyu. "If you're lucky, the gentleman sitting next to you with a cup of tea might just be Huang Yongyu," Xu said. "Famous artists like him are frequent visitors of the gallery."

The gallery's cuisine doesn't follow any fixed Chinese culinary tradition. The chefs represent a mixed bag of styles, though all of them are good at creating new flavors out of common dishes. Xu calls the sour Mandarin fish (198 yuan) a "must-order," as it was made famous by a top chef who worked in one of Japan's Shangri-la hotels for six years.

"Though a common dish, the chef chooses to use special flour imported from Japan for making tempura, ensuring its crispiness," Xu said. "Our chefs keep coming up with ideas to make delicious and creative dishes inspired by their experiences."

The kitchen emphasizes the freshness of its ingredients. "The vegetable dish sauteed Chinese kale with preserved pork (98 yuan) is made of kale bought at 40 yuan per kilogram, five times the average price of kale," Xu said. "Only the freshest 30 percent of the vegetable is used."

Wooden screens partition off special rooms for tea and wine tasting, where waitresses dressed in elegant qipao serve guests.

And downstairs, walking on a path paved with flagstones, guests are introduced to authentic paintings, rosewood furniture and wood sculptures. "If the guest is interested in the stories behind the art works, the waiters can elaborate in detail," said Xu, adding that his goal is to use his restaurant and gallery to promote Chinese culture.

Heping Gallery

Where: 17, Guang Hualu, Chaoyang District
Open: 9:30 am – midnight
Tel: 8562 2680

Russian romanticism near Ritan Park

By Li Zhixin

There may not be lots of Russian restaurants in Beijing, but each of them is special and exquisite in its own way. Sim-Sim is no exception.

The three-floor building's wooden walls, floorboards, tables and chairs, combined with traditional Russian and Azerbaijan decorations, give the place the classic feel of a 19th-century aristocratic hangout. The food is equally authentic, with a variety of choices for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Georgian steamed lamb dumplings (35 yuan), Azerbaijani rice with lamb and dry fruits (60 yuan), a boiled lamb leg with vegetables in homemade sauce (48 yuan), pan-fried beef tongue (40 yuan), stuffed vegetable rolls with minced beef (47 yuan), homemade pan-fried beef cutlets (45 yuan), beef cutlets with egg (48 yuan) and Caucasian fried chicken (45 yuan) are just some of the more popular dishes.

General manager Aida said customers often praise Sim-Sim's Caucasian barbecue selection, which includes rainbow trout skewers (49 yuan), lamb chops (57 yuan), lamb innards (50 yuan), Lyulya Kebab lamb rolls (45 yuan), Shah Kebab veal rolls (53 yuan) and Lyulya Kebab chicken rolls (45 yuan).

The manager also recommends



Photos provided by Sim-Sim

appetizers such as the chive patty (25 yuan), meat patty (25 yuan), and desserts like Pokhlava (15 yuan) and Mutaki (15 yuan).

During dinner, live bands provide entertainment, which can be enjoyed over a variety of 40-yuan cocktails, including white and black Russians, mojitos, pina colodas and kamikaze shots.

If the bottom floor – which can seat more than 100 – doesn't do it for

you, try upstairs. There are two hookah tables on the second floor, where customers can smoke and drink while watching live performances. A VIP room for 12 is available for rent (1,000 yuan minimum tab required), and is great for business gatherings and private parties.

The third floor is a terrace that provides a stunning view of Ritan Park. Dining on the terrace and enjoying the night breeze can be comfortable during the summer – and the candle lighting certainly doesn't hurt.

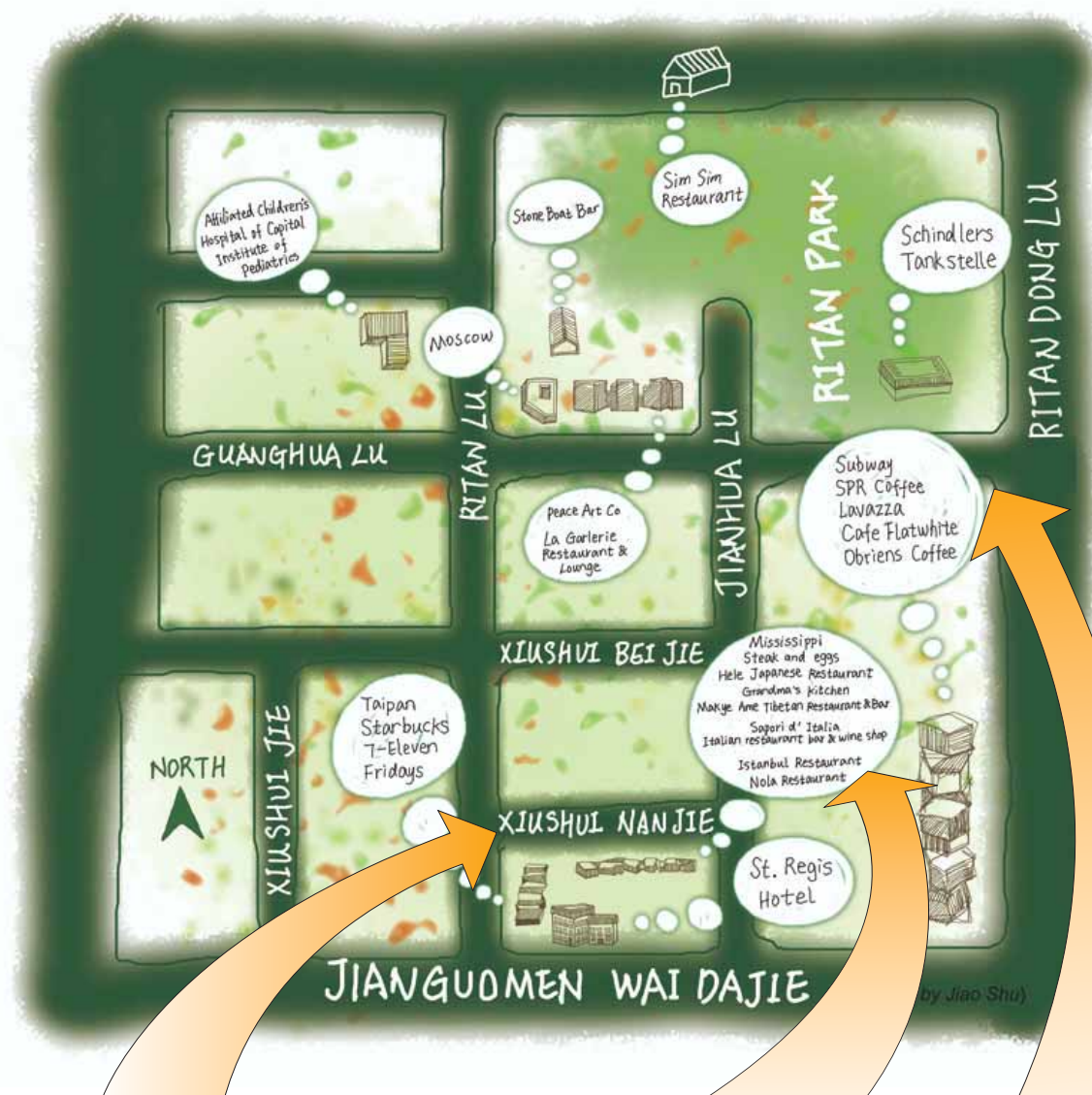
Sim-Sim

Where: No. 39 Shenlu Street, 3-39, Chaoyang District, opposite of Ritan Park north gate

Open: 7 am – 2 am next day

Tel: 8569 3102 / 3103

Cost: 150 per person



Xiushui Nan Jie

Steaks and Eggs

Where: 5 Xiushui Nan Jie
Open: 7:30 am – 10:30 pm, weekends 7:30 am – midnight
Tel: 5820 2670

Hele Japanese Restaurant

Where: Beside Steaks and Eggs, Xiushui Nan Jie
Open: 10:30 am – 11:30 pm
Tel: 6501 7798

Grandma's Kitchen

Where: 11 Xiushui Nan Jie
Open: 7:30 am – 11:30 pm
Tel: 6503 2893

Makye Ame Tibetan Restaurant & Bar

Where: 2F, A11 Xiushui Nanjie
Open: 11 am – 11 pm
Tel: 6506 9616

Saporio d'Italia Italian Restaurant Bar & Wine Shop

Where: 17 Xiushui Nan Jie
Open: 10 am – midnight
Tel: 6593 2079

Istanbul Restaurant

Where: B7 Xiushui Nanjie
Open: 10 am – 11 pm
Tel: 6503 2700

Nola

Where: A11 Xiushui Nanjie
Open: 11:30 am – 11:30 pm
Tel: 8563 6215

Cafe Oriental Taipan

Bakery items on the first floor are half off after 8 pm. Congee served after 11 pm is made in traditional style and reasonably priced.

Where: 2F, Sunjoy Mansion, 6 Ritan Lu
Open: 11 am – 2 am next day
Tel: 6585 3478

Starbucks

Open: 7 am – 10 pm
Tel: 6595 4675

7-Eleven

Where: 1F, Sunjoy Mansion, 6 Ritan Lu
Open: 24 hours

Fridays

Where: 1F, Sunjoy Mansion, 6 Ritan Lu
Open: 11:30 am – midnight
Tel: 8526 3388

St. Regis Hotel

Where: 21 Jianguomen Wai Dajie
Open: 24 hours
Tel: 6460 6688

Around Ritan Park

SimSim Restaurant

Where: Opposite north gate of Ritan Park
Open: noon – 2 am
Tel: 8569 3102

La Galerie Restaurant & Lounge

Where: West of south gate of Ritan Park, Guanghua Lu
Open: 10 am – 3 pm, 5 – 10:30 pm
Cost: 200 yuan per person
Tel: 8562 8698

Schindlers Tankstelle

Where: West 888, Ritan Office Building, 15 Guanghua Lu
Open: 11 am – 1 am next day
Tel: 8562 6439

Peace Art Co

Where: 17 Guanghua Lu
Open: 9:30 am – midnight
Tel: 8562 2680

Stone Boat Bar

Where: southwest corner of Ritan Park, southeast end of the lake
Open: 10 am – 11 pm
Tel: 6501 9986

Moscow

Where: Southwest corner of Ritan Park
Open: 11 am – 3 am next day
Cost, 100 yuan per person
Tel: 6586 3217

Silk Street

Subway

Where: 1F, Silk Street
Open: 7:30 am – 10 pm
Tel: 5169 8896

SPR Coffee

Where: 1F, Silk Street
Open: 8:30 am – 11 pm
Tel: 5169 8411

Lavazza

Where: 1F, Silk Street
Open: 9 am – 10:30 pm
Tel: 5169 8870

O'Briens Coffee

Where: 1F, Silk Street
Open: 8:30 am – 10:30 pm
Tel: 5169 9298

Cafe Flatwhite

Where: 1F, Silk Street
Open: 9 am – 11 pm
Tel: 5169 9156
(By Jackie Zhang)